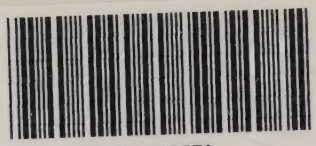
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VOL. X

EDITED BY SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND.

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CONTENTS.

PAGE

Introduction. By Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., F.R.S.L. . . . . .

I. 'The Testament of Beauty.' By Laurie Magnus, M.A., F.R.S.L. 1

II. Jane Austen: A Reply to Mr. Garrod. By R. W. Chapman, M.A., Hon. D.Litt., F.R.S.L. . . . 17

III. Carl Spitteler and the New Epic. By James F. Muirhead, M.A., L.H.D., F.R.S.L. 35

IV. Some Aspects of Modern Scottish Literature. By The Lady Margaret Sackville, F.R.S.L. . . . 59

V. Charlotte Carmichael Stopes: Some Aspects of her Life and Work. By Frederick S. Boas, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 77

A Bibliographical List of the Writings of Charlotte Carmichael Stopes. Compiled by Gwendolen Murphy 96

VI. Politics and Character in Shakespeare's 'Julius Caesar.' By Sir Mark Hunter, M.A., D.Litt., F.R.S.L. 109

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INTRODUCTION.

By Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., F.R.S.L.

Of necessity these lectures differ greatly from one another. But in their very contrast the one serves to reinforce the other. And in their togetherness they become one more Testament of Beauty. Mr. Laurie Magnus's lecture on Robert Bridges' 'The Testament of Beauty' might indeed be taken as the connecting link between them—or rather as an indication of the fountain-source from which all beauty in literature springs.

For is not Beauty, in Bridges' view, a testament to God—a witness to the working of a spiritual power in the Universe? Beauty in nature was to him the revelation of God. And fifty years he spent in the combined effort of first searching for Beauty, and then in beautiful language expressing what he had discovered. And what Beauty revealed was God's love, which was "as inescapable as Nature's environment." We are steeped and immersed in the Love of God. And the Beauty is the testament of that Love. This seems to be the final outcome of Robert Bridges' work. And ultimately it must be the base on which all lovers of art—whether in literature or in its other branches—work. Whether in physical nature or in human nature they, like Bridges, are

searching for Beauty—discriminating between the deeply beautiful and what has only a superficial beauty, making ever new discoveries of hidden, unexpected treasures, and trying to get us to see what is there before our eyes, but to which we are as blind as the babies in perambulators are to the glories of Hyde Park in May.

The trouble for us poor babes is that where one artist sees beauty, another sees only insipidity. Professor Garrod is evidently "left cold" by Jane Austen—or anyhow, as a revolt against undue adulation, has been forced into this state of frigidity —while Professor Chambers, like thousands of others, is filled with admiration. But perhaps, after all, this may be only to the good—only a testament to the infinite variety of beauty in the world. Professor Garrod would perhaps prefer the wild, stormy, more masculine beauty that Emily Brontë reveals; while others like the more gentle, intimate beauty of Jane Austen. Some there are who find the austerity of the Himalaya too stern, and its grandeur overpowering, and who prefer the sweeter intimacy of the plains. And so it must always and everywhere be. And blessed are we that it is so.

Besides which the poet has to suggest even more than he can say straight out. Magic suggestion is to the living Scottish poet, Lewis Spence, the all-in-all in poetry. Moreover, the suggestion is made to the heart and not to the mind. Beauty must thrill us to love more than stimulate our minds to think. It should not be the servant of the mind, but the spouse of the heart. This is Lewis Spencer's view. And Lady Margaret Sackville shows how in Scotland to-day

letters are well alive. Burns is not the last word. There were Scottish poets before him. And there are Scottish poets after him. Some, like Marion Angus, are recapturing the spirit of the past and reincarnating without imitating the old ballads. Others, like William Jeffrey, learn of Wordsworth, but write verse peculiarly their own or, like the one-time miner, Robert Crawford, write with a delicacy and strength which show that "flowers which blossom with difficulty in Northern air may, for that very reason, outlive some of the softer blossoms of easier summers."

And the search for Beauty is no dreamy occupation, unrelated to the stern realities of life. In the view of Spitteler, the German-Swiss poet, who has given us the two great epics 'Prometheus and Epimetheus' and 'Olympian Spring,' the idealist makes the best realist. And love of beauty can raise us above the commonplace, rescue us from the vulgar, enable us to forget affliction, misery and contention, and dissolve sorrow and misery. So thinks the man whom Romain Rolland considers the greatest German poet since Goethe.

And now we come back to Shakespeare. Two out of the six essays in the present volume are concerned with our national poet. For though Prof. Boas' paper is concerned with Mrs. Stopes, she herself was greatly concerned with Shakespeare, and not only with his work, but with his life and associates. But one little incident of present-day interest apart from Shakespeare is worth attention—the description she gives of the performance of the Oberammergau Passion Play. She saw it fifty years ago, and she

happened to have just come to Oberammergau from Palestine. In the Holy Land itself she had not been able to get the impression she had sought. But in the performance of that play by Bavarian peasants among the Bavarian Hills she had caught the ancient spirit. The actors were honest wood-carvers who had been chosen for some resemblance to the characters they were to represent, and in keeping constantly to these characters they had become more and more like them. Through the art of the drama that supreme beauty—the beauty of holiness—had been made manifest.

'THE TESTAMENT OF BEAUTY.'

By Laurie Magnus, M.A., F.R.S.L.

[Read January 29th, 1930.]

It is not easy to speak in ordinary terms of the Poet Laureate's 'Testament of Beauty.' Even the youngest critic out of the newest school of poetry is aware of something unique. It is exceptional to publish a book so rich in poetic ornament and in scientific knowledge at the age of 85. But what is even more exceptional in the circumstances is that the poet is* a man of science, who was a schoolboy of 14 when Darwin published his 'Origin of Species.' Alone among Victorian poets, Dr. Bridges studied biology under the sign of Evolution. After leaving Oxford he practised medicine, and held appointments at various London hospitals, from which he retired in 1882. Thus, his decisive years of manhood, from 25 to 38, were spent in active work as a physician, in the period of expanding curiosity which Darwin had opened out in the realm of physical science; and the forces which formed the physician have come to expression in the poet. He has had half a century in which to ponder his experience. Fifty years ago, he was a physician of the body; to-day, he is a physician of the mind; and he has always shown himself fully aware of the intimate relation between the two.

* Dr. Bridges died on April 29th, 1930.

I shall come presently to the evidence. But first I should like to emphasize the unique features in this record. Consider, for example, the record of a contemporary man of letters. Thomas Hardy, poet and novelist, who was four years older than Dr. Bridges, lived till January, 1928. But Hardy was an architect, and not a physiologist, by training; and architecture, one of the noblest professions, and a very living art at certain times and in certain places, was less immediately necessary, despite its famous "Seven Lamps," to the pursuit of the truth sought in England, in the mid-nineteenth century, than this study of *physis*, or nature. Dr. Bridges is the first of our major poets who has absorbed Darwinian speculation into his verse. Wordsworth died before it in 1850. Tennyson, with his openness to impressions, was as receptive to Darwin as to Lyell; but he was more than twenty years older than Dr. Bridges, and the difference of a generation was important. Tennyson's attitude towards what we call Darwinism may be compared with that of Milton towards the astronomy of Galileo. Each poet came in contact with each philosopher, and recognized the changing basis of physical thought, but the new knowledge in both instances, in Milton and Tennyson alike, was *with* the two poets rather than *of* them. Dr. Bridges belonged in this regard to a later generation than Tennyson. He would have been young enough to receive 'The Origin of Species' as a prize, if Eton had ventured to choose it for presentation. And, fortunate in his generation, he was fortunate, too, in his tastes, which directed him to physical inquiry. And, fortunate in his generation and in his tastes, he

has enjoyed the exceptional good fortune, in the fruits of which we share, of those fifty years of leisure for poetry. Here, then, surely, is an essential aspect, apart from the evidence to personal vigour, of the relation of this poem to its author's age.

Before passing to the poem itself, one or two externalities may, briefly, be mentioned. And, first, a word about its name. Titles of poems are seldom important. 'Paradise Lost,' 'De Rerum Natura,' 'The Prelude,' 'Commedia,' might be interchanged without damage, except for their acquired associations. But this name of "Testament" is rare. It has nothing to do with an old man's legacy. It is testificatory rather than testamentary, the declaration of an ethical will, not the disposition of worldly goods, and its poetic use goes back to Jean de Méun and Villon in the Middle Ages. Even more significant than the "Testament" is the "Beauty" to which testimony is borne through four books and more than 4000 verses. For this search for Beauty in Nature, for Beauty as the revelation of Nature, as the attainable end and recognizable mark of Natural law, has been a governing object with Dr. Bridges through all these fifty years. We go back to his sonnet-sequence, 'The Growth of Love,' which began to appear in 1876, and we find, in the eighth of those linked poems, that—

> "Beauty being the best of all we know
> Sums up the unsearchable and secret aims
> Of nature . . .
> Nor is there fairer work for beauty found
> Than that she win in nature her release
> From all the woes that in the world abound."

In Nature, observe : not supernaturally. For, again, in the 16th sonnet :

> " This world is unto God a work of art
> Of which the unaccomplished heavenly plan
> Is hid in life within the creature's heart,
> And for perfection looketh unto man."

Once more, no superman's quest ; and, though the form of words is not unfamiliar to those who recall such phrases as that of an older physician, Sir Thomas Browne, " Nature is the Art of God," or that of Edward Young, " The course of Nature is the Art of God," it is obvious that Dr. Bridges intends a meaning less fanciful and more demonstrable than theirs, in accordance with his conclusion to the 35th of these sonnets :

> " All earthly beauty hath one cause and proof,
> To lead the pilgrim soul to beauty above."

Poetry, since Lucretius and Virgil, has been the proper vehicle for a pilgrimage of this kind, and the poetic metre chosen by Dr. Bridges is Romance itself. It derives its name from the old French lays of Alexander's travels and conquests, which were sifted out of ancient legend into the heritage of European poetry. " Loose Alexandrines " Dr. Bridges calls his verses (II, 841), and in so long a succession of examples of a verse, familiar chiefly to English readers at the close of the Spenserian stanza,

(" Fierce wars and faithful loves shall moralize my song "),

the irregularities are not unwelcome. The six beats struck by the twelve syllables do not always fall where they are expected. The eye can sometimes

scan a verse, which the ear cannot hear musically, and the ear has to accept it from the eye. Every reader will find his own examples, and he may find, too, that the degree of looseness varies according as the verse is read silently or aloud, and even singly or in sequence. But some looseness every reader will find, and, so finding, he will doubtless remember that Milton's blank verse makes similar demands, and that an unvarying series of verses like "fierce wars and faithful loves" might prove endlessly tiresome. More external still to the poem itself is "the slight approach to a simplified spelling," which the publishers warn us to expect. In actual effect, it is too trivial for comment, and against the inconvenience of the small type may be set the completion of each verse in a printed line, and the numeration of the verses in sets of ten. Lastly, among these externalities, there are the alliterative delights devised by a master of words, and the magic phrases of a maker of musical sound. I need suggest but one or two examples from the first eighteen verses of Book I, and commend them as typical of the rest.

"We sail a changeful sea through halcyon days and storm"

is a mosaic of *s* and *a*.

"The path was narrowing and the company few"

foreshortens the view by the use of two astringent and folding vocables.

"A landscape so by beauty estranged
he scarce will ken familiar haunts, nor his own home,
maybe, where far it lieth, small as a faded thought."

The long tenacious sounds in "landscape estranged"

emphasize the separation of the traveller from a homely spectacle quick with little words; and the simile of the "faded thought" is as graceful as the effect of the *f* and *th* which it picks up.

Let me turn from the manner to the matter. "The play's the thing," here as elsewhere, and the King whose conscience is to be caught is no other than King Demos, whose rule has been extended so vastly during the lifetime of the poet, and whose growing need of self-government has preoccupied the energy of Parliament and statesmen. For this 'Testament of Beauty' is a moral poem, as the 'Idylls of the King' are moral, and as the 'Faery Queen' is a moral poem. A difference is, that the King or Queen is left out. The old epic crutch of the allegory is discarded, and the realities hinted at by Tennyson in a disguise,

> "New-old, and shadowing sense at war with soul,"

are released by Dr. Bridges from the epic trappings of an Arthuriad, whether Elizabethan or Victorian, whether Spenser's or Tennyson's, and the substance is displayed without the shadows. The convention of warfare disappears. "Sense" is reconciled with "soul." Science, at one with faith, forgets the conflict of former centuries; "and thus I stand," declares the poet (II, 819),

> "Where I conclude
> that man's true wisdom were a reason'd harmony
> and correlation of these divergent faculties:
> this were the bridge which all men who can see the abyss
> hav reasonably and instinctively desired to build;
> and all their sacraments and mysteries whatsoe'er
> attempt to build it; from devout Pythagoras
> to th' last psychologist of Nancy or of Vienna."

In this philosophy "soul" is first, and sustains no losing fight against "sense." For "in truth" says the poet (IV, 1132),

> "'spiritual animal' were a term for man
> nearer than 'rational' to define his genius;
> Faith being the humaniser of his brutal passions,
> the clarifier of folly and medicine of care,
> the clue of reality, and the driving motiv
> of thatt self-knowledge which teacheth the ethick of life."

And, if I may make a brief digression, suggested by this comparison between Dr. Bridges and Tennyson, I would annotate the "sacraments and mysteries" above, and point out how fully the present laureate shares his predecessor's belief in the efficacy of prayer. "Pray for my soul," cried King Arthur. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of"; and so, immediately after the verses which I quoted just now, Dr. Bridges deplores the fact:

> "And yet hath Prayer, the heav'n-breathing foliage of faith,
> found never a place in ethick."

He compares it to the bodily exercises which athletes use, and ascribes to it, spiritually, equal value.

Returning now to the "reason'd harmony," with its "bridge" between sense and soul, and observing (II, 825), that—

> "between spiritual emotion and sensuous form
> the same living compact maketh our Art,"

the poet seeks the means to build it. The greatest is beauty.

" Beauty " he had said in 1876, " being the best of all we know," " Beauty," he repeats in 1929,

> " is the highest of all these occult influences,
> the quality of appearances that thru' the sense
> wakeneth spiritual emotion in the mind of man " ;

and Beauty in its various manifestations is thus the quest of the poem—its holy grail, pursued without recourse to the hampering conditions of chivalry.

Book IV, where the search is pursued with ample illustration from observation both old and new, opens on the note which closed Book II. Its first verses are :

> " Beauty, the eternal Spouse of the wisdom of God
> and Angel of his Presence thru' all creation,
> fashioning her new love-realm in the mind of man "

(the realm travelled in Book III, on " Breed," or sex),

> " attempteth every mortal child with influence
> of her divine supremacy."

None is exempt from that attempt. But its attainment may be a sudden thing,

> " as Augustin saith,
> that fools may come at holiness where wise men miss,"

and there will even be a " birthday of surprisal," the memory of which recalls us, here as elsewhere in the poem, to the summons of Wordsworth in ' The Prelude.' For surely it is the " mortal child " of the ' Immortality ' Ode, whom Dr. Bridges bids us mark :

> " See then the boy in first encounter with beauty,
> his nativ wonder awaken'd by the motion of love ;
> as when live air, breathing upon a smother'd fire,
> shooteth the smouldering core with tiny flames—so he
> kindleth at heart with eternal expectancies,
> and the dream within him looketh out at his eyes."

We are very close to the youth travelling westward in verse 58 of this Book :

> " so in the child this glimpse or touch of immanence,
> being a superlativ brief moment of glory "

(" Where is it now, the glory and the dream ? "),

> " is too little to leaven the inveterate lump of life "

(" Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life ") ; and the " intimations " (IV. 78)—the word is common to both poets—have to—

> " come to be understood
> and harmonised by Reason in the conduct of life . . .
> and thatt science, call'd Ethick, dealing with the skill
> and manage of the charioteer in Plato's myth,
> rangeth up here in place for the parley of this book."

Which brings me only to verse 90 thereof.

The next twenty verses supply proof of the significance to moral poets of the Darwinian hypothesis enounced in 1859. It struck across the amiable fictions and the easy conventions of the age, and reinstated Man in Nature. It is a generalization, of course, but it is not incorrect to say that Rousseau and his disciples, during a period of about a hundred years, did tend to encourage moral poets to draw sustenance from a fallacy of physics, and to express an antithesis, which was still articulate in Tennyson, and which has left deep marks on modern literature,

between natural law and humankind. When "Nature's holy plan," for example, is said to be frustrated by "what man has made of man," we are left by Wordsworth with a feeling that the moral law is more than natural. The attitude is not the same, but it is equally fallacious, as that of Dante, for example, in such verses as the following ('Paradiso,' XXX, 122):

> "For there where God immediately doth govern,
> The Natural Law in naught is relevant."

("Are God and Nature then at strife?" Tennyson asks in similar terms.) But these comparisons would lead us too far. The point is, that Dr. Bridges, the fortunate child of the era of physical freedom, has no doubts, philosophic or pragmatic. He rejects the temptation to abstract "a special faculty, distinct from animal bias and underivable," in order to explain the responsible moral Ought; and he has the courage, emulated by George Meredith, but nowhere so plainly displayed, to recognize it as—

> "no other indeed than the prime ordinance
> that we call Law of Nature,—in its grade the same
> with the determin'd habit of electrons, the same
> with the determining instinct of unreasoning life."

Wordsworthians will align this primary perception with the older poet's secondary sense of—

> "something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns, . . .
> And in the mind of Man;"

but the fusion is now logical and complete, and marries Ethick with Physick.

I must not linger from verse to verse, though each one adds to delight, but the

> " young black ouzel, now building her nest
> under the Rosemary on the wall, suspiciously
> shunning my observation as I sit in the porch,
> intentiv with my pencil as she is with her beak,"

should not be passed by. For her acquisition of the habit of physical duty leads to the poet's eager testimony,

> " I halt not then nor stumble "

—(not even " honest doubt " for him)—

> " at how the duteous call
> was gotten in course of nature, rather it lieth to show
> how it was after-shapen in man from physical
> to moral ends, and came no longer only to affirm
> but sometimes even to oppose the bidding of instinct,
> positing beside OUGHT the equivalent OUGHT NOTS,
> the stern forbiddances of those tables of stone
> that Moses fetch'd out of the thunder of Sinai ; "

with the social conclusion—a four-word motto for our schools—that " education shapeneth our moralities."

The argument in verses 159–207 is closely knit, and introduces the praise of Teachers (232 foll.),

> " the loved and loveable, whose names liv evermore,
> the sainted pioneers of salvation, unto whom
> all wisdom won and all man's future hope is due."

In " their ampler air " the poet sees the mistake of the " sticklers for equality,"

> " a doctrin kindly at heart, that cajoleth alike
> diffidence of the ruler and conceit of the crowd,
> who in collusion float its credit."

This epigram from human history is worth weighing,

for it leads through a rebuke of the "levellers," who "deem all ethick one," and "preach class-hatred as the enlighten'd gospel of love," to the magnificent and already famous comparison of their shallow foundations with those which Mr. Woolley has broken through :

> "Should they look to find firm scientific ground,
> whereon to found their creed in the true history
> of social virtue and of its progress hitherto,
> 'twil be with them in their research, as 'twas with him
> who yesteryear sat down in Mesopotamy
> to dig out Abram's birthplace in the lone grave yard
> of Asian monarchies."

The figure suggested as a simile is expanded, Homerically, into a detailed picture (verses 279–337) of the walls, and under-walls, and yet earlier walls, revealed by the labours of the spade ; of the contents of the old King's tomb, and of the sudden spiritual horror of the digger, which the poet learned from his own lips, at discovering the horrid remains of oxen, grooms, bodyguard, and women of the harem—the sacrifice by which the King sought to defeat the sense of loss of his possessions,

> "the day when he set forth
> to enter into the presence of the scepter'd shades
> congregated with splendour in the mansions of death."

And then the abrupt comparison with our own King Henry VIII, first styled Defender of the Faith, whose "Western manners" did not withhold him—

> "from slaying his wives at will ; nor was he for such crime
> less esteem'd of the folk ; altho' judged as a man
> by pagan ethic or christian or by the insight
> of poet or historian, more despicable
> than we need to suppose that old monarch of Ur."

And so, direct to the revelation of—

> " how cross-eyed the pride of our world-wide crusade
> against Nigerian slavery, while the London poor
> in their Victorian slums lodged closer and filthier
> than the outraged alien ; and under liberty's name
> our Industry is worse fed and shut out from the sun."

Facit indignatio versum : " In every age and nation a like confusion is found."

The first section of this Book having discussed Duty, the second section (verses 362–594) discusses Pleasure, and it is remarkable, not merely for its philosophic argument, but for the particular delight of its central verses (466–501), proceeding from—

> " the imponderable fragrance
> of my window-jasmin, that from her starry cup
> of red-stemmed ivory invadeth my being,"

through the—

> " Lily-of-the-vale, Violet, Verbena, Mignonette,
> Hyacinth, Heliotrope, Sweet-briar, Pinks and Peas,
> Lilac and Wallflower, or such white and purple blooms
> that sleep i' the sun, and their heavy perfumes withhold
> to mingle their heart's incense with the wonder-dreams,
> love-laden prayers and reveries that steal forth from earth,
> under the dome of night "

(surely worth collecting among poets' bouquets), to the poet's vision of odour as visible as colour, where he might see—

> " the summer garden aureol'd in rainbow clouds."

So we come to the conclusion of the whole matter, from verse 761 to the end of the Book and poem. And, first, since, earlier in this Book, we caught some echoes reminding us of Wordsworth, it is grateful

now to hear in places the mighty sound of Wordsworth's epic masters, Virgil, Dante and Milton. As the opening words of the 'Divina Commedia' were recalled by verses 8 and 9 of Book I:

"'Twas late in my long journey, when I had clomb to where
The path was narrowing and the company few";

so here, towards the end of the journey, the same clear note is struck again, with more subtly made Roman music. The poet—

"plungeth into the darksome grove
and secret penetralia of ethic lore, wherein
I have wander'd often and long and thought to know my way,
and now shall go retracing my remember'd path,
tho' no lute ever sounded there nor Muse hath sung,
deviously in the obscure shadows."

It is the tone as well as the language which is reminiscent, and I may quote in the original Latin three verses from the 9th Book of the 'Æneid' for the sake of their verbal and musical likeness:

"Quave sequar, rursus perplexum iter omne revolvens
fallacis silvae? simul et vestigia retro
observata legit dumisque silentibus errat."

Dr. Bridges enters his grove "at the great clearing made by Socrates of yore," where the tremendous "Know thyself" made so great a "felling of trees"; and there, surveying the dense silence, he realizes the full difficulty of his quest. For—

"not Socrates knew
nor any hath ever kenn'd how man thinketh; and less
how thought thinketh itself; nor how in thatt province
Reason hath right to rule; not of what stuff the reins

> can be, wherewith the Charioteer bridled the steeds
> in that same vision of his which Plato saith he told
> to Phaedrus, as they sat together on the banks
> of the Ilissus, talking of the passions of men."

It is the old epic burden restated in terms of the modern mind :

> " errabant acti fatis maria omnia circum "

(they wandered, driven by fate, round all the seas of thought)—

> " tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem."

We need not follow the final stages of that voyage through the last five or six hundred verses of the poem. I do not even claim that it is fully successful, or that we should not say of ' The Testament of Beauty,' as has been finely said by the historian of Latin literature of its ancient analogue, " De Rerum Natura," that " its permanent value must lie mainly in more universal qualities," and that the poet's true greatness resides " in his moral temper, his profound insight into life." We note his professional knowledge (IV, 1013) as a physician, who " call'd in to heal an indigestiv stomach," has " recourse to palliativs and sentimental assurances of favourable conditions, exercise and air " ; we note how he rises from this argument to the exaltation of Religion as something fundamental and undistinguishable from Duty itself (*ib.*, 1093) ; and at this crisis of the poem, we are aware, from internal evidence, that of Dr. Bridges, as of Lucretius, it is correct to say that, profound as is his interest in the progress of physical science, still more profound is his hope of the moral liberty and intellectual freedom which that progress is calculated

to extend. For, though Religion sprang from the same primal reality as Duty, yet "it also aborted in like dolorous superstition," so that—

> "the honest indictment of the Epicurean
> goeth unrefuted, and his famous verse *tantum*
> *religio potuit suadere malorum*
> yet ringeth true."

In a very real sense, warned perhaps by the Epicurean, the evolutionist is wiser than the atomist. He is aware of the frontiers of knowledge :

> "Wherefor as when a runner who hath run his round
> handeth his staff away, and is glad of his rest,
> here break I off, knowing the goal was not for me,
> the while I ran on telling of what cannot be told.
> For not the Muse herself can tell of Goddes Love."

This, then, is the limit, illimitable, of the ambition of Dr. Bridges. In his new-old attempt to justify the ways of God to man he has broken away, it may be observed by the student of comparative literature, from the common hypotheses of moral poets—Virgil, Dante, Tasso, Milton—and has built his bridge between man and God without recourse to epic legend, whether of Sinai or Parnassus, whether of heaven or earth. "For Goddes love," he says,

> "is inescapable as nature's environment,"

and needs no adventitious convention, no inveigling to Reason, whether by the shadows of mortal hero-kings or by the mystic figures of an anthropomorphic theology,

> "peopling the inane that vexed her between God and man
> with a hierarchy of angels."

On these heights, where silence reigns, we leave him serenely with his peers.

JANE AUSTEN: A REPLY TO MR. GARROD.

By R. W. Chapman, M.A., Hon. D.Litt., F.R.S.L.

[Read November 20th, 1929.]

Mr. Garrod of Merton, at the close of his tenure of the Professorship of Poetry at Oxford—a tenure marked by a series of lectures* on the poets, not less learned than they were brilliant, not less judicious than they were original—made a sortie in the field of prose, in which he seems to many to have shown less sterling merit. His 'Jane Austen: A Depreciation' is exceedingly amusing; all the more so for having been written light-heartedly and without thought of publication. He asks us "not to read it as though it were a doctoral thesis." But I think my quotations will show that it is not a mere *jeu d'esprit*, any more than Morgann's 'Falstaff' is a mere *jeu d'esprit*. θέσιν διαφυλάττει; he has taken his side, and sticks to it at any cost; but the thesis lies near his heart. His lampoon deserves attention, therefore, because it is his; it deserves attention, further, because it is no more than an extreme statement of opinions which have been expressed before, and will no doubt always be held.

Mr. Garrod does not disclaim malice; indeed he tells us that his malice is deliberate—"if at any point

* Since this was written, the publication of 'The Profession of Poetry' has placed Mr. Garrod in the front rank of living critics.

I am unjust, that will be not accident but design "—and that it is the best part of his lecture. But he makes a (qualified) admission of imperfect knowledge, and almost an admission of prejudice, which are worth notice. He first read the novels as the prisoner (the expression is his own) of a gaoler who permitted him no escape from the society of "this great woman." Mr. Garrod does not think that there have been any great women in literature except Sappho and Emily Brontë, who were "souls fiercely and darkly masculine." This may be significant; but let it pass. Though he was thus initiated a long time ago, and has "for a good many years been trying to discover" why he dislikes Jane Austen, we may be tempted to think that he has conducted this self-examination without much refreshing his memory. At least he concedes that, when his paper was written, it was some years since he had refreshed it; and he has subsequently detected one passage where he was "served by a faulty memory" and has corrected it in a note. But the correction is of a piece with the corrigendum. In the text he had said, "I can recall no man who keeps a dog." The footnote runs: "There *is* a dog, I am told, in 'Northanger Abbey.' If there is, it is Miss Austen's fault that I have forgotten him." *Quot homines.* I can only reply that it is her merit that the picture of Henry Tilney surrounded by "the friends of his solitude, a large Newfoundland puppy and two or three terriers," has been vivid in my mind since I saw it first some thirty years ago.

I am driven to this hypothesis, of a mind working upon an antecedent prejudice without real subsequent

verification, by certain critical judgments which I find otherwise inexplicable. How can a critic, if he has recently, or at any time, steeped himself in 'Mansfield Park,' 'Emma,' and 'Persuasion,' describe the plots of these books as a "husband-hunt"? Admitting, for argument's sake, that this is a plausible account of the three earlier books, how can it be thought to hold for the three later? And how comes a critic of Mr. Garrod's competence to see in Jane Austen "no artistic development"? How can he find in 'Emma,' that masterpiece of constructive skill, no advance on the simplicities—I had almost said the crudities—of 'Sense and Sensibility'? How can he fail to see, in the twilight tints of 'Persuasion,' a change from the high noon of 'Pride and Prejudice'? Mr. Garrod has, of course, consulted the novels and the letters, but I think he went to them only for what he sought.

A good example of Mr. Garrod's malice is the remark in passing that Jane Austen's father "was a pluralist clergyman." Has Mr. Garrod investigated the grounds of this insinuation? I should like to know the distance between Steventon and Dean, the populations of those parishes, and the amount of their incomes. When he tells us that Jane Austen accepted "as not only good, but natural," the "worn and shabby institution of simony," I do not know to what passage in her novels or her letters he alludes. But he has much more to say about her clergymen.

"Jane Austen's parson is the younger son of a gentleman. If he were the elder son he would not be a parson, since it is not only difficult for the rich to enter the Kingdom of Heaven,

it is boring for them, and absurd. But it is not absurd—or not absurd to Miss Austen—and it is obviously convenient, that second sons should live by the gospel."

Is it an adequate answer that Jane Austen's clergymen *were* the younger sons of gentlemen? The brothers of her sister-in-law, Elizabeth Austen, for instance, were Sir Brook William, fourth baronet of Goodnestone in Kent; the Rev. Brook Henry, rector of Danbury; the Rev. Brook Edward, rector of Bonnington and vicar of Lenham; and the Rev. Brook John, rector of Saltwood and Hythe. Mr. Garrod's quarrel seems to be with the age rather than with its historian. If he is telling us that in an age so corrupt as the Regency everything is impure that does not proceed from the mouths of reformers or rebels, I invite him to explore the implications of that generalization. If not, he should not abuse Jane Austen for telling the truth.

Jane Austen's clergymen "trouble neither poor nor rich with any hint of their ghostly office." It will not do, I suppose, to remind Mr. Garrod of Sir Thomas Bertram's views, shared by his son, of the duties of a parish clergyman, or of Fanny Price's opinions on sermons. And when we are told that in her villages "there are no cottages of the ill-to-do," it will be vain to urge that her clergymen do in fact visit the poor and the sick, and that her heroines, like Jane and Cassandra themselves, do in fact make clothes for old women. In either case, no doubt, the motive was equally shabby.

She regards with like complacency the "worn and shabby institutions of nepotism and the marriage of convenience." There is not much more in the former

charge than that William Price and Francis Austen were promoted by interest. Surely it is too much to expect Jane Austen to be shocked by a method of advancement which, whatever its faults, did not prevent the British Navy from doing its duty. Both Francis and William were efficient officers. That Jane's interest in the navy was "severely limited to a sisterly concern that her brothers may be advanced by influence rather than by merit" no one who has read her letters, or 'Persuasion,' with an open mind will believe.

The charge of condoning the marriage of convenience is more serious. It is, indeed, the gravest of Mr. Garrod's specific charges. If a woman of Miss Austen's period and enlightenment saw nothing wrong in mercenary marriages, we ought to be shocked. But Mr. Garrod has forgotten the facts. It is Mary Crawford and Charlotte Lucas who accept or defend the mercenary or otherwise unromantic marriage, it is Jane and Elizabeth Bennet and Fanny Price who condemn it. Jane Austen's own view may be read in her letters to her niece: "Anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection."

"No one in any book of Miss Austen's has any work to do. Wentworth in 'Persuasion' has been a sailor, William in 'Mansfield Park' is going to be one. But in general Miss Austen has no use for anyone who is of use in the world's work. 'Emma' contains the only character drawn from a class other than her own—the young Martin. Since he is called a farmer, it must be presumed that he is contaminated by useful employment."

This passage teems with inaccuracies. William

Price was a sailor on leave; Frederick Wentworth was a sailor temporarily unemployed. I do not expect Mr. Garrod to remember that Mrs. Wentworth had nothing but "the dread of a future war" to "dim her sunshine. She gloried in being a sailor's wife, but she must pay the tax of quick alarm for belonging to that profession which is, if possible, more distinguished in its domestic virtues than in its national importance." But I should have expected him to remember Mary Musgrove's apprehension lest Wentworth be made a baronet. Neither a baronetcy nor a hero's death could be earned except by active service. In singling out Robert Martin for commendation as the only useful male member of Miss Austen's world, he takes it for granted that parsons and country gentlemen had no duties or useful employments. But he is a little hard on Mr. Knightley, who was clearly a busy man (much closeted with William Larkins), and forgets John Knightley altogether, to say nothing of such persons as Mr. Gardiner, Mr. Perry, or Mr. Shepherd, whom I am glad to reckon among my acquaintance, though I dare say Mr. Garrod has forgotten their names.

"It is not enough for Miss Austen that her village has no room for God or the poor. Nature also is rigidly excluded. There are no trees outside the gentleman's park, and even so it is only the sentimental Marianne Dashwood who takes any notice of them. The 'outward shows of sky and earth, of hill and valley' Miss Austen either never views, or views with distaste. Her villages are mudflats; and I can recall no aspects of nature to which she ever directs attention save rain and ruts."

Mr. Garrod has put his blind eye to the microscope. He thinks every opinion of Marianne's is evidence

that Jane Austen held the contrary opinion; and he is wrong.* He has forgotten Fanny Price. He has failed to notice the contrast, drawn with a sure hand, between the verdure of Mansfield and the glare of Portsmouth. He has forgotten the Dashwood girls in a high wind, Anne Elliot at Kellynch and at Lyme, Emma Woodhouse at Boxhill, Elizabeth Bennet (in imagination) at the Lakes.† Mr. Garrod has failed, I think, to see what every reader of Jane's letters ought to see—that she was never so happy as in the country. All her heroines, like herself, were fond of walking—that is why mud was a serious evil—in fields and lanes. Her landscapes are sprinkled with trees, which she loves for their shade and their colour. I know no greener England than the England of Chawton and Godmersham, of Mansfield and Northanger.

Mr. Garrod has felt the necessity of some reference to the lapidary and other testimonies to Jane Austen's virtues, which we owe to her family. "When Jane was dead, her relations gave out that she was, despite her cleverness, kind." But common family partiality and common family prudence do not explain these testimonies. The elder Miss Austen was not a

* A youthful admirer of 'Sense and Sensibility' calling him- (her-) self "A Friend" (I suspect a nephew or niece; the letter has the Alton postmark) addressed some verses to the author:

> "On such Subjects no Wonder that she shou'd write well,
> In whom so united those Qualities dwell; . . .
> Fair Elinor's Self in that Mind is exprest,
> And the Feelings of Marianne live in that Breast."

† "What are men," cries this disappointed husband-hunter, "to rocks and mountains?"

Miss Austen, her brother tells us, "was a warm and judicious admirer of landscape, both in nature and on canvas," and "at a very early age was enamoured of Gilpin on the Picturesque."

demonstrative, nor, I think, a literary lady, and her evidence deserves credit. I quote a letter written within a few days of Jane's death:

"She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow; I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself."

One of her nephews found his visits to Chawton, after Jane's death, disappointing; and was puzzled by this till he realized "how all its peculiar charm was gone; that the chief light in the house was quenched." One of her nieces records that it was "a habit with me to put by things in my mind, and to say to myself, 'I shall keep this for Aunt Jane.'"

Jane Austen's "situation, character and knowledge are in almost every direction absurdly limited." In particular, "she is complacently detached" from books. "It would be difficult to name a writer of similar eminence who possessed so little knowledge of literature and history." It is not altogether possible to refute this doctrine; for if Miss Austen's reading did her no good, it does not matter what she read. But it is strange that a mind admittedly so acute should be so much occupied in reading and gain no information from books.* We know a good deal about her reading. Her novels do not abound—why should they?—in literary allusions; but they show that she had read Shakespeare and Johnson. We should guess, from what we are told of Anne Elliot and Fanny Price, that their creator had formed her mind, as they formed theirs, by solid reading; and we can verify the guess. Jane Austen read a

* She had not much formal education; but, like Mr. Bennet's daughters, she was "always encouraged to read."

great many novels; but she read also poetry, biography and travel. She does not show great enthusiasm (though Fanny Price and Captain Benwick do) for Scott or Byron; and it is only the absurd young baronet in 'Sanditon' who rhapsodizes about Burns and Wordsworth; but she shared Marianne's enthusiasm for Cowper (has Mr. Garrod forgotten her syringa?) and admired Crabbe (did the "eighteenth century Miss" read Crabbe?). She had somehow learned that "Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is part of an Englishman's constitution"; and knew that "Henry VIII," read with spirit, could make a Fanny Price drop her needlework. She must have been less easily bored than Mr. Garrod allows by questions of public interest; for she got through such books as Carr's 'Travels,' Henry's 'History of England,' and the 'Letters of Espriella,' and found Captain Pasley's 'Essay on the Military Policy and Institutions of the British Empire' "delightfully written and highly entertaining . . . the first soldier I ever sighed for; but he does write with extraordinary force and spirit." Her remarks on her own books are very few, but they have been thought to show penetration and delicacy as well as natural affection.

"It was not her nature to ask questions, and neither books nor life had taught her to do so. Her experience, her interests, her morality, her education were precisely those of any other young woman of her time and place. She was an eighteenth century 'Miss,' exempt from none of the trivialities of her environment or sex."

This, I think, is nonsense. This "eighteenth century Miss" has no existence in reality. Were

the experience, morality and education of Jane and Elizabeth Bennet the same as Lydia's and Kitty's? Are Isabella Thorpe and Anne Elliot identical in character and triviality? If Mr. Garrod is saying (and he comes near it) that eighteenth century women (not being daughters of the Revolution) are all dolls or cats or both, perhaps I had better not go on. I will content myself with suggesting that a woman of no intellectual curiosity and no education could not have written 'Mansfield Park,' with its theory—erroneous I dare say, but held with fervour, and resolutely pursued to its conclusion—on the topics of environment and education.

The action, in Mr. Garrod's view, is as drab and monotonous as the characters are uniform.

> "The range of episodes is limited to a dance, a picnic, a morning call. In both 'Pride and Prejudice' and 'Mansfield Park' there is an elopement; but the horrid act is in each case announced by letter, and decorum is little ruffled, dulness not greatly relieved."

If Mr. Garrod means by this that Jane Austen was not interested in guilty passion except as a piece of machinery; that she did not understand the operation of animal appetite in a Lydia Bennet, or of passion, pride, and contumacy in a Maria Bertram, it is difficult to follow him. But he does seem to think that Jane Austen herself was incapable of passion, and was not interested in the subject. If she was interested only in "average feminine triviality"; in "everything in feminine nature except that which is noble and permanent," we must suppose her not interested in the virtuous passion of a right-minded young woman, or as we now say of "a really nice girl"—Elizabeth,

or Jane, or Anne—for the young man of her choice. But if this is so, it is odd that she makes her girls (and I would add, even her young men) speak and otherwise behave so very much as if they really were in love. Jane Austen does not model her love-scenes on Smollett; but you will find a similar reticence in Sir Walter Scott.

Mr. Garrod confesses admiration for 'Pride and Prejudice,' and gets on quite nicely with Elizabeth. Since the subject of 'Pride and Prejudice' is a husband-hunt, I suppose that he admires Elizabeth for what he takes her to be—a young woman of wit and spirit, as hard as nails (see 'Man and Superman'), and an accomplished flirt. For no room has been left, in Mr. Garrod's definitions, for softer virtues, such as love of father or sister, or contrition for her ill opinion of Darcy, or any genuine modesty when she is caught in the grounds of Pemberley.

Mr. Garrod has a weakness even for Darcy, who "may be a cad, but is not a Muff." Her other young men are dismissed as muffs or puppets.

> "It may be doubted whether she herself felt at home among them. It has been observed that nowhere in any of her books does one man talk to another."

I think Mr. Garrod got this observation from myself; and I accept his inference: "clearly Miss Austen did not know how young men do talk to one another." How should she? Young men of her own class would not talk freely to each other in her presence; and on this delicate subject books could teach her little. She had not the opportunities of a George Eliot. This, of course, is a limitation. I do not know

that it is fatal to her art. Perhaps she knows her young men sufficiently well for her purpose; she probably knows them as well as *their* young women knew them, which was well enough for marriage. At least she knows them well enough to like them; I think she was well aware of the limits of her knowledge; and I find both honesty and modesty in one attempt she makes to extend it by conjecture. You will remember that when she visited an exhibition of pictures, she was delighted to find there an admirable likeness of Mrs. Bingley, but disappointed to find no Mrs. Darcy:

"I can only imagine that Mr. D— prizes any picture of her too much to like it should be exposed to the public eye. I can imagine he would have that sort of feeling—that mixture of love, pride, and delicacy."

Having dismissed as negligible Jane Austen's knowledge of male character, Mr. Garrod next limits her knowledge of female character.

"She knew, and was interested in, not her own sex, but that rather small subdivision of it which was most like herself. . . . The average feminine triviality interests her immensely and entertains her adequately. She sees, with a malicious acuteness of vision which just falls short of insight, everything in feminine nature except that which is noble and permanent. . . . That is why women (I fancy) rarely read her, and among men those only, as I have said, upon whom has fallen that twilight which alone has no romance with it, middle age."

If the premise—that women do not care for Jane Austen—were true, the conclusion would undoubtedly follow that her young men are unattractive to women, and her girls unpleasing. The premise is, of course,

demonstrably and even laughably false. I have in mind a large number of women, both young and old, both realists and romantics, who enjoy themselves in Jane Austen's world as keenly as I enjoy myself.* Nor is it true, as Mr. Garrod imagines, that only the middle-aged read her. I hesitate to cite my own experience, for Mr. Garrod may think he has closed that door—" some men are born middle-aged." But *you* will perhaps permit the declaration that I read the novels before I was twenty, with greater zest, though with less discernment, than I read them to-day; and the confession that Catherine Morland (" a romantic little fool ") was my earliest love. But I have heard the young of both sexes—ardent spirits, on the tops of 'buses—discussing Jane Austen's people with the high seriousness they might have given to their own concerns. This is not the interest that is excited by the " average feminine triviality," no matter how truthfully or how cunningly caught. And surely it would be a strange kind of genius that should catch the external trivialities, " everything which does not matter " (and get them right every time), without any knowledge of, or concern for, the elemental female from which these trifles spring. Mr. Garrod not only fails to show why the trick is immortal ; he fails even to show how it is done.

Having posited perfect simplicity in this author, who has but one plot, one interest, and one talent, Mr. Garrod is naturally impatient of any complexities. When he finds a character that does not suit him,

* Among them one who, returning to school in her 'teens, sat in a railway station and missed three trains under the enchantments of ' Northanger Abbey.'

he dismisses it as unreal. Anne Elliot is such a character; Anne Elliot, who "had been forced into prudence in her youth, and learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning"; who visited "a widow Mrs. Smith, lodging in Westgate-buildings!—A poor widow, barely able to live, between thirty and forty—a mere Mrs. Smith, an everyday Mrs. Smith, of all people and all names in the world," and "preferred her to her own family connections among the nobility of England and Ireland"; who "prized the frank, the open-hearted, the eager character beyond all others," and "felt that she could so much more depend upon the sincerity of those who sometimes looked or said a careless or a hasty thing, than of those whose presence of mind never varied, whose tongue never slipped"*; who did not "love a place the less for having suffered in it"; who claimed for her own sex no more enviable privilege "than that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone." This is a character not easy to reconcile with the view that its creator was unromantic, cautious, cold-hearted, a snob and a cynic. But Anne Elliot is not to be admitted in evidence; for she, like Fanny Price and Elinor Dashwood, is a character not to be met with except in "a land flowing with milk and water."

Alternatively, Mr. Garrod professes inability to understand motives. When Jane Austen's young men threaten not to fit the definitions of Muff and Elderly Eligible, Mr. Garrod complains that their characters are "wanting in clearness." He "never

* These words remind me of Mr. Garrod's own description of Miss Austen's frigid circumspection.

quite knows what Tilney or Wentworth, still less Crawford or Willoughby, are getting at." I am surprised, but relieved, that Mr. Garrod finds this author's proceedings sometimes obscure. She did not mean them to be always obvious.

On the same selective principle, Mr. Garrod persists in describing Jane Austen's message as delivered by "a slip of a girl"; though Jane Austen was forty when she wrote 'Persuasion.'

Mr. Garrod has a good deal to say about the "votaries" of Jane Austen. He thinks us wrong in many of our opinions—for example in finding Emma Woodhouse a convincing character, or Fanny Price and Anne Elliot creatures of flesh and blood. But he does not altogether condemn us as incompetent judges of literature. Nor does he regard us—though I am not sure that in logic he ought not to regard us—as no less unpoetical, wordly and unamiable than Jane Austen herself. But he signally fails to explain us, and his failure to do so is the measure of his failure to understand Jane Austen.

I believe I am speaking for all of us—all lovers of Jane Austen—when I say that my feeling for Mr. Woodhouse and Miss Bates, like my feeling for Emma Woodhouse, is one of personal affection at least as much as it is one of critical appreciation of supremely skilful miniature-painting. I am, I hope, no less incapable of leaving Mr. Woodhouse in a draught, or of yawning at Miss Bates's narratives, than I am of being rude to Miss Woodhouse, or of wishing her to marry Frank Churchill. I confess that, familiar as it is, I cannot read the passage in which Emma, with the cruelty of youth, allows herself

a sneer at Miss Bates's garrulity, without shame and mortification. The scene in the "White Hart" at Bath I still, for the twentieth time, read with a beating heart, as though it were still possible that true love might be frustrated.

Mr. Garrod ought, I think, to have paused to ask himself how so cold and selfish a woman as he believes Jane Austen to be, had skill to paint those superb portraits of selfishness, Sir Walter Elliot and Mrs. Norris. That he has never asked himself how such a woman could so paint absurd old gentlemen and tiresome old maids that, when they have been a century in their graves, we love them only less well than we love her beautiful and charming young women, is equally clear, but is not surprising. For Mr. Garrod is unaware that Jane Austen could do this.*

"If at any point," Mr. Garrod writes, "I am unjust to her or to myself, that will be, not accident, but design." I think he has done himself a graver injustice than any he designed. He has accused Jane Austen of cynicism. But it is himself he would convict of cynicism when he tells us that Jane Austen is fit only for middle age, and that middle age is "that point of age in men when they have begun to ask whether anything matters." This is a good definition of middle-aged cynicism, but it is a cynic's definition of middle age. If Jane Austen appeals with especial force to men who are tiring—and it may well be that she does—that is not because middle age is cynical, but because it is the age of experience and

* It is perhaps not without significance that this reply was almost entirely written on a railway journey and from memory.

wisdom. I like to believe that the middle-aged man who loves Jane Austen is a man who has outlived some of the selfishness and some of the follies of his youth, but has not grown less charitable or less tender; the man who knows—as Jane Austen well knew—that though there are many things in life which engage the attention, there are few things which tug at the heart-strings except the things that pertain to youth: the loves and the follies of young people, their high spirits and their high endeavours, the perils of their innocence. Jane Austen's novels, like most novels, are mainly concerned with the experiments of youth. Lady Catherine and Mr. Bennet are infinitely diverting, but crabbed age is no more than a foil. Few writers have known more—at least about young women—than Jane Austen knew, or cared more than she cared. Her hold upon us is due to the depth of that knowledge, to the warmth of that affection, and to the remarkable power, allowed her by Mr. Garrod, for "reducing the results of her observations to a record truthful in substance and apt in form."

This is the confession of a believer. But I am aware that there is more to be said. Mr. Garrod's objections are, I think, insecurely based, and are easily dislodged. He has made Jane Austen odious; it is sufficient confutation to reply that she is loved as not many authors have been loved. But if I point out that Mr. Garrod fails to account for me, and for the multitude of which I am one, I am constrained to admit that I cannot account for him. And he is not a lonely eccentric. There has always been audible, below the chorus of praise, an undertone of hostility; and this hostility calls for explanation. I suspect

that it arises in part from inattention, in part from political prejudice, in part from an impatient idealism, in part, perhaps, from some lack of charity. But I know that this is an ancient and fundamental quarrel which will hardly be composed; and that I have made no attempt in this paper to plumb its depths.

CARL SPITTELER AND THE NEW EPIC.

By James F. Muirhead, M.A., L.H.D., F.R.S.L.

[Read December 3rd, 1930.]

The real genesis of this address is my strong conviction that the German-Swiss writer, Carl Spitteler, is a truly great poet, coupled with a natural and consequent desire to make him better known among English readers. A very few words of introduction will, I hope, make it clear that I am not without support for my view, and will relieve me of the odium of a purely egoistic position.

Carl Spitteler was born in 1845 at Liestal, near Bâle, and died at Lucerne in his eightieth year, in 1924. His first really important work, the prose epic of 'Prometheus and Epimetheus,' was published in 1880–81, when he was 36 years old. The final and definite version of his long metrical epic, 'Olympian Spring,' was given to the world in 1910, and was the chief factor in deciding the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature, conferred on him in 1919. His other works include volumes of short poems, several short prose novels or romances, a collection of essays, and another epic on the subject of Prometheus, written in verse. This last work appeared very shortly before his death in 1924. Of these three epics I shall have more to say later.

The well-known Swiss poet, playwright, and literary

critic, Joseph Victor Widmann, was a lifelong friend of Spitteler, and one of the first men of note to appreciate his work. The first foreign admirer to express his views of Spitteler was Felix Weingärtner, the well-known composer and conductor, who published an enthusiastic little book on 'Olympian Spring' in 1904. Herr Weingärtner, whom the poet was wont to describe as "Mein Entdecker," was only the first of a long line of eminent men to join in a chorus of praise for Spitteler. The most thorough-going of these is M. Romain Rolland, who calls Spitteler the modern Homer, the greatest German poet since Goethe, and the only master of the epic since Milton died three centuries ago. Other individuals and societies who have testified their respect for him include the French Academy, the Société des Gens de Lettres, the Sorbonne, Rostand, Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Boutroux, Baudouin, and Bergson. A recent bibliography enumerates no fewer than 230 books and pamphlets dealing with Spitteler and his works. Dr. Jung devotes about 50 pages of his 'Psychological Types' to an analysis of his epics. Just the other day the Swiss Federal Council (*Bundesrat*) took over from Spitteler's heirs all his literary remains, published and unpublished, and appointed a Commission to prepare a complete National Edition of his works. Perhaps these facts are enough to justify my belief that English readers can hardly afford to ignore this poet. He is entitled to stand our trial, whatever the verdict may be.

'Die Mädchenfeinde,' a romance of childhood, was translated by Mme. La Roquette-Buisson, an American lady, in 1922, but the translation is unfortunately

out of print. The only other English translations I know of are the three published by Miss Ethel Colburn Mayne and myself within the last four years. Several of his works have been translated into French, and single volumes have appeared in other languages.

Though all his works are worthy of attention, it is as epic poet that Spitteler must stand or fall. The three epics I have mentioned occupied a very large proportion of his time and energy. The theme of 'Prometheus,' as a symbolic figure, was almost as continuous and important a factor in Spitteler's career as 'Faust' was in Goethe's. The interval of fifty years between the publication of 'Prometheus and Epimetheus' (1881) and 'Prometheus der Dulder' (1924) is not much less than that between the composition of the first scenes of 'Faust' (1774) and the appearance of the 'Second Part of Faust' (1831). In each case the poet was working on his theme up to within a few months of his death.

Spitteler has fortunately left us a very clear exposition of his conception of the epic, written some time before 1898, when it appeared in a volume of collected essays under the title of 'The Forbidden Epic.' This may be described as a protest against the current idea that in our day the epic has been wholly supplanted by the novel. A few extracts from this essay will make his position plain:

"The maxim that the Epic is no longer permissible in modern times is one of the most precious gems in the thesaurus of every man of culture. If one ventures to knock shyly at the portals of the brain and beg for a friendly explanation of why this is the case, one is met by a peevish murmur to the effect that the primitive days of the nations, the youth of

mankind, and a naïve outlook on the universe form the only tolerable atmosphere for the Epic. Besides, the conclusion goes practically without saying, as is proved by the total absence of this form of art to-day, accompanied by the brilliant development of the romance, the true epic of the nineteenth century. In fact, it is an eternal and fundamental truth.

"Thus, since the Homeric period furnished the above-mentioned conditions, the epic was all right then. Since they are lacking to-day, the epic is all wrong now. *Verbum sap.*

"Good. The idea is plausible. But nobody seems to find it necessary to prove the assumption that the alleged fact is a knockdown blow, that the Homeric age really did afford the required conditions. That is, presumably, another eternal and fundamental verity. Otherwise what would be the good of the popular catchwords that enable us to dispense with thinking, knowledge, learning, and other annoyances of that kind? And, of course, when we have not the most primitive ideas of what a given era was, it is clear that it must have been a primitive era.

"I do not need here to give a historical lecture. But if the cavalier manner in which Homer handles his gods betokens a naïve outlook on the universe; if the exceedingly blasé and degenerate culture of the Ionic Asia Minor represents a state of infancy; if never-ending bewailing of the present, homesick longing for the past, and despair of the future are signs of the youth of humanity, then I claim the right to assert that the nineteenth century is an example of childhood. . . .

"'Primitive condition, childhood, youth of humanity,' 'naïveté of outlook on the universe,' 'bloom, maturity, old age of nations.' Who would venture to argue here as if these were known quantities? What if I asserted that humanity was never young and that no era was ever naïve? And this is just what I do assert. Is there really a biology of nations? Does anyone know when a people is young or when it is old? Is there anyone who would venture to decide dogmatically whether (*e. g.*) the Germans or Russians of to-day are an old or a young race, or whether they are at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of their career?

"We do not even know what a 'nation' or a 'people' is.

Is it determined by its mother-tongue and traditions, or by its constitution, politics, fatherland, and boundaries, or by its habits, customs, festivals, and religion? Do we know a single law of the life of nations, even if it be assumed that there can be laws of life for an abstract collective personality like a 'people'? Such considerations show that all the wisdom about naïve views of the universe, or the childhood and youth of mankind, or the youth and age of nations, is sheer foolishness.

"Moreover, the fate of this eternal and fundamental verity is just the same as that of all other verities. If we take the trouble to make a closer examination, we shall always discover low down in the right-hand corner, a proper name in small characters, with 'fecit' and a date appended. . . . Even in the eighteenth, as in all previous centuries, the epic was still regarded as the dearest and highest aim of every poet. Lessing put it in the first place, Goethe essayed it, Schiller yearned to it. And what has become of the famous sun of Homer? I suppose it has suffered an eclipse. . . .

"Should we then wait for the epic until the gracious return of primitive conditions, naïve views of the universe, and the youth of mankind? Then we'll have to wait until the evening of time, for this state of affairs will never return, for the very good reason that it has never been there before."

It may sometimes be a little difficult to decide whether a given work is or is not entitled to be called an epic. We all at once recognize that the 'Iliad' is an epic and that 'Jack and Jill' is merely a tale in rhyme, but much debatable land lies between these two extremes. At the present day we find in Germany almost any kind of novel masquerading as an *Epos*; and even among ourselves the word epic sometimes appears as rather shorn of its original connotation. The problem need hardly detain us here, for Spitteler's epics conform thoroughly to the usual acceptance of epic as meaning a sustained and

dignified narration of heroic adventure, generally under supernatural guidance. While, however, accepting the traditional or conventional machinery of the epic, Spitteler uses it with great elasticity. His epics may be read simply as fascinating narratives, with no other end in view than poetic and romantic pleasure. But it is also easy to bring them into allegorical touch with ordinary human life; and at times there seems almost a prophetic quality in the keen satire of many episodes. Humour is one of Spitteler's pronounced characteristics, and it is rare indeed to find it so inextricably intertwined with tragic happenings, romantic emotion, and picturesque description. Some readers may possibly find there is a little too much of this, especially in his habit of personifying everything, from a worm, a plant, or a cloud, to a fatuity, a thought, or a conscience. The more familiar one is with Spitteler, the more used one becomes to these personifications; and I confess I have reached the stage where their quaint appositeness almost invariably reconciles me to their fantastic quality.

A background of supernal beings seems almost an integral factor of the typical epic. Witness the works that occur to us at once as epics great beyond all question: The 'Iliad,' the 'Odyssey,' the 'Aeneid,' 'Paradise Lost,' Tasso's 'Jerusalem Delivered,' the 'Lusiads,' the 'Niebelungenlied,' —not to mention the Sagas or the religious epics of the East. Spitteler is quite in line with the orthodox tradition. But he has not, like the other modern poets, contented himself with a transferred or allegorical use of classic or other legend. He has created

a cosmogony or mythology of his own, producing single-handed and, as it were in one gesture, what in other cases it has taken ages to evolve. The plot of his longest epic, 'Olympian Spring,' is based on the downfall of Kronos and the Titans, followed by the reign of Zeus and the Olympians. But the Greek myth is treated with the utmost freedom, as little more than a general framework for new episodes invented by Spitteler himself. The names of the Greek gods are commonly used, but their new relation to their prototypes barely retains their general position in legend and often varies their qualities and adventures. Hera appears as the mortal Queen of the Amazons, wedded by force of circumstances to Zeus, who would otherwise have been at best her second choice. Ananke becomes masculine. Ajax is promoted to be an Olympian. Innumerable new characters are added, with such convincing names as the Seven Lovely Amaschpand, Hyphaist the Dwarf, Pelarg, Theopomp, Koproz, the Ape Greulich, and the like. Similar remarks may be made about the two Prometheus epics, though here the hero retains his essential character of champion of humanity against the tyranny of the Gods. The theft of fire, however, is not referred to. Pandora, far from being a mischief-maker, with a box full of winged curses, is a divine maiden, dominated by sympathy for mankind and ready to endow them with a panacea for all their ills—an attempt frustrated only by their own folly and that of their credulous sovereign, Epimetheus. Behind Prometheus, at once a part of himself and an external force, is his Mistress Soul, which prompts him to refuse the Conscience offered

him by the Angel of the Lord, and may be taken to represent the direct or personal inspiration which every man, in his highest moments, feels to be his paramount and imperative guide. Epimetheus, on the other hand, a thoroughly well-meaning individual, accepts the conventional Conscience, which is the condition of his receiving the kingship of mankind, and ultimately comes to complete shipwreck.

In treating classical mythology in this manner, Spitteler is acting quite consciously and deliberately. He admits that the epic poet ought not to make Andromache rage and storm like Ajax, but he argues that he is quite at liberty to represent his chief figures as vague, wavering personalities. Careful analytical characterization is not his *rôle*. His attitude towards psychology is, on the whole, one of repugnance ; his supreme law is to transmute spiritual states into objective appearances. Ulysses, when abused, simply shakes his head, instead of going through a spiritual struggle for the behoof of the reader. When Rinaldo's unresponsive inamorata finally falls in love with him on seeing that his love for her was cooling off, Ariosto does not, like a novelist, give an analytical account of the transformation. He simply invents two wonder-working springs. "He who can invent after this fashion is an epic master." For Spitteler the problems of the epic poet and the writer of romances are diametrically opposite. They only have one point in common, the unfolding of a record in narrative form. They may, it is true, be both advancing along the same road ; but this involves no closer resemblance than that between

the mounted knight and the snail he overtakes on the highway.

Spitteler writes his epics as the bard or skald tells his tales. They represent direct and momentary inspiration rather than the coherent erection, stone by stone, of some vast and clearly envisaged edifice. No doubt, as is the case with all inspired writers, he often builded better than he knew; and in the outcome we may recognize that there is nothing really irrelevant or out of place. But it is idle to try to grasp, as we read, the exact meaning of every episode, the concrete links connecting paragraph with paragraph. Far more enjoyment will ensue if we read his epics in the spirit in which he himself replied to a request for enlightenment: "If you find these scenes beautiful, you have understood them and I have nothing to explain; if you do not find them beautiful, so much the worse for me, but I cannot give you any better explanation."

M. Alain has well pointed out that in a written masterpiece details that seem in themselves unimportant are often essential to the beauty of the whole. Each word contributes its part. The beauty of a long poem cannot be embraced in one glance, as if it were a statue. It must be read and re-read; and no doubt one reader must beguile another. Description and analysis fail utterly to pass on the glamour.

Spitteler's attitude on this point has not, however, saved him from the analyst; and commentaries on his epics are already numerous. It is to be hoped that their fate may not resemble that of 'Part II of Faust,' which has been described as the most

discussed and least read of great poems. One of the most interesting of these commentaries is that of Dr. Jung, who treats Spitteler's 'Prometheus' more or less in connection with Goethe's fragmentary drama on 'Prometheus' and with 'Faust.' I note it here, however, rather as a recognition of Dr. Jung's general reputation among psychologists than as a sign of any very thoroughgoing agreement on my own part. Dr. Jung identifies Prometheus with the typical introvert, while his brother Epimetheus is the equally typical extravert. Neither is wholly right or wholly wrong. The ideal or perfect man results from a combination of the two, a consummation which Dr. Jung considers to be indicated by the final reconciliation of the two brothers. To most readers the so-called introvert will seem to contribute by far the larger share of virtue to the combination, as the forgiveness extended by Prometheus to his brother is the result of an almost divine magnanimity, which throws utterly into the shade the somewhat whining penitence of the erring king. In Pandora and her part Dr. Jung sees the spiritual counterpart in the unconscious of the *rôle* of Prometheus himself in the conscious. It is interesting to compare with this Spitteler's novel entitled 'Imago' (published in 1906), which in his own words "gives the record of an actual life-experience, while 'Prometheus' shows what the poet has made of it. 'Imago' explains 'Prometheus.'" It is certainly true that Spitteler believed that the idealist makes the best realist. "Surely," he writes, "it is a real emotion to be raised above the commonplace, to be rescued from the vulgar, to be able to forget affliction, misery, and

contention, to see sorrow and mourning dissolved in beauty." And again: "We do not see the outside world any the less clearly because the house through whose windows we behold it is well-furnished and not empty."

The resemblances and contrasts of Spitteler's 'Prometheus' and Goethe's 'Faust,' which can be merely touched on here, would furnish material for a very interesting paper. On the whole, Goethe's hero is more extraneous than Spitteler's, more in touch with the external world, more (in psycho-analytic language) of the extravert. Faust and Mephistopheles really combine to form one whole, like Prometheus and his soul—a whole of which Mephistopheles more particularly represents the Epimethean side of the Promethean-Epimethean Faust. In the end we find Faust finding his final satisfaction in disinterested service rendered to his fellow men. Prometheus, too, ends with the achievement of an inestimable benefit to humanity. But whereas the protagonist of the optimistic Goethe dies in the odour of a complete sense of harmony of self and life, Prometheus remains the dweller in the inner world of the soul and retires to his hermitage, leaving the actual work of reconstruction to others.

Another writer who is inevitably recalled by the Prometheus epic of Spitteler is Nietzsche, were it only for the fact that the earlier version of Prometheus is written in a hieratic, biblical, rhythmical prose not unlike that of 'Also Sprach Zarathustra.' [It should be noted that Spitteler's work appeared two or three years *before* that of Nietzsche.] The

difference between the two prose-poems is, however, really essential. Zarathustra is a preacher, addressing his audience directly. The significant truths of Prometheus are presented to us incidentally, in a series of narratives, parables, allegories, and pictures. Though both are rebels against conventional Christianity, Spitteler clings to the divine quality of pity which Nietzsche rejects with scorn. And Spitteler's Superman is not above the laws of ordinary morality.

A point on which Spitteler lays great stress in his compositions is the use of the direct address. Prof. Sellar (among other authorities) tells us that Homer stands out among epic poets for the way he makes his characters known to us through speech as well as through action. His epic genius was reinforced by his dramatic genius. Spitteler's resemblance to the Greek bard in this point is no doubt one of the reasons which impelled Romain Rolland to call him the modern Homer. Dialogue and soliloquy are constantly used by Spitteler to elucidate his points; and to these he adds, as Homer did, the charms of apposite oratory. The direct address "has a moderating power, by compelling the imagination to dwell upon a given scene, it bridles the inartistic, purely concrete curiosity that is so distasteful to the poet." Again, it "heightens the vraisemblance of the narrative. The illusion of a character who, in direct address, uses my language and thinks my logic, is stronger than the illusion represented, in indirect address, merely by action or by a rough summary of his words."

I have already mentioned humour as one of the

most characteristic features of Spitteler's muse. This is as apparent in his epics as elsewhere—a rare feature in epic poetry, in spite of Samuel Butler's essay on 'The Humour of Homer.' Perhaps we may find his nearest parallel in the 'Orlando Furioso,' with which he was very familiar. And it may be said of him, as it has been said of Ariosto, that he does not compromise his dignity by his jests, and that his sense of humour is not indulged in to the detriment of his sense of the pathetic or the tragic. One sometimes feels as if Spitteler's whimsical touches in serious passages *ought* to shock our sense of fitness, but to one reader at least they almost invariably have the effect of driving home the serious intention. They seem to come to the rescue of the nervous ganglion just in time to prevent its utter exhaustion. Unfriendly critics might argue that they resemble the stimulants given to sufferers on the rack so that the torture may be prolonged under favourable conditions. Spitteler's humour is not only fanciful, but often shows an irony at once bitter, gay, and witty. Whole episodes are pervaded with humour throughout, as (*e. g.*) the canto of 'Olympian Spring' narrating the stolen visit of that naughty hussy Venus to the earth. One of Spitteler's most sympathetic critics has written that "the reader could never have imagined that great poetry could have so little solemnity"; and I wholly subscribe to what I take to be the meaning of this remark if I am allowed to insert an epithet such as "wearisome" or "highbrow" before the term "solemnity." The humour of Spitteler is not aggressive or obtrusive; but I am convinced that he held the view that humour almost

vies with beauty as a consolation and solvent of the tragedy of existence.

The apparently extravagant assertion of M. Romain Rolland, that Spitteler is the only master of the epic since Milton, has a good deal to be said for it. 'Paradise Lost' was published in 1667. Since then (confining ourselves to English and the better known European languages) we have had Voltaire's 'Henriade' (1728), long poems in narrative form by Byron, Wordsworth, Southey, Walter Scott, and Tennyson, Longfellow's 'Hiawatha' (1855), Doughty's 'Dawn in Britain' (1906), and 'Das Nordlicht' of Theodore Däubler (1910).

A glance at this list is enough to convince us that none of these poems, in spite of their many merits, seem to belong to the same class as the 'Iliad' or 'Paradise Lost.' Some of them lack the dignity of epic; others are too personal; still others are too didactic, too descriptive, or too philosophical. None of them, I venture to assert, would leap to our minds if we were suddenly asked to enumerate the great epics of the world. Goethe's 'Faust' and Hardy's 'Dynasts,' two of the greatest modern works of poetic imagination in the grand style, are dramatic rather than epic. I am told that the best epics of the early nineteenth century were written by Pushkin, Mickiewicz, and other Slavs, but these are beyond my purview and, I suspect, probably beyond that of M. Rolland also. No one is entitled to speak of poetry unless he can read it in the original. If it is objected that Spitteler's 'Olympian Spring' is essentially different from any of the generally recognized great epics mentioned in this paper, the assertion

could hardly be denied. But its unlikeness consists, not in any neglect of the fundamental epical qualities of these poems, but in a difference of external form due to Spitteler's special poetic gift and to the age in which he wrote. I do not know whether there are admirers of 'Marmion,' 'The Idylls of the King,' 'Childe Harold,' or 'The Prelude' who would be ready to go to the stake for the thesis that these are truly great epics; but I do know that Spitteler's followers, many of them familiar with the works cited, would be ready to face at least the pillory of the Republic of Letters in defence of a similar assertion about 'Olympian Spring.' One of these is, of course, M. Romain Rolland; and, though I have no title to speak for him, I think I may claim another among your own honourable Fellows in the person of Prof. J. G. Robertson, who wrote an admirable appreciation of Spitteler as far back as 1921. They would, I am convinced, agree that Spitteler possesses in full measure the requisites of an epic poet as laid down by himself.

> "Heartfelt pleasure in a fullness of experience, whether of facts or events; joy in the many-hued richness of the world, and especially, be it noted, in the wealth of external appearances; a longing for distant horizons; a thirsty craving for the air of the heights, far above the workaday world, even beyond the bounds of actuality and the limits of the intellect."

It is, of course, a futile task to give by description to those who have not read it any idea of the power and beauty of a great poem. Who, *e.g.*, could convey to others any proper appreciation of the poetic imagination with which 'Endymion' or 'Paradise Lost' is saturated? I have thus not attempted this

kind of description or analysis in my address to-day. But perhaps I may have succeeded in letting you see why Spitteler wrote epics and what his attitude was in writing them. For anything else one most go to the poems themselves. Naturally these are very much finer in the original than they could be in any conceivable translation. But Spitteler is a poet in whom the thought generally counts for so much, and the German and English languages are so akin in many important ways, that it seems to me that a good deal of his quality may be seen even in the dim reflection of an English mirror. With this hope in my mind I venture to add a short passage from each of his three epics. These will no more help a reader to realize the beauty of the poems than a single brick would help to conceive a true image of the Great Pyramid. But they may serve to suggest one or two of the characteristic qualities of the Poet.

EXTRACT FROM 'OLYMPIAN SPRING.'

(Translation by Ethel C. Mayne.)

Then in the sea incarnadine o'erhead
Rose the great firebird Phoenix from his bed,
And lighting on a fir-tree preened his wings
Of shimmering flame, and glanced at earthly things;
Then closed his eyes, opened his beak, and sang
His matin-song—like some bronze bell it rang,
Ornate with images, and thus they soared,
The pregnant words that golden voice outpoured:
"What soul, you ask, is this that from the dew
With radiant eyes looks earnestly at you?
Hear! These are tidings from the Son of Light,
Written on vale and field throughout the night
When he, a captive far in desert lands,
Through prison-bars will stretch his longing hands—

Thus daily to dark earth in secret giving
Assurance that he still is loving, living.
Aurosa, whom he loves yet ne'er may meet,
Scans the brave letter, sad and yet so sweet;
At peep of day the forest-gloom she leaves,
From silvered lawns the dewy message weaves
With careful fingers, till she understands
The love-words traced by those beloved hands.
Secret the cipher, to none other known;
The hallowed script is clear to her alone,
Gem of her diadem, Horizon named—
Soon as the first of morning-beams has flamed
She reads the rune: 'In this we meet at last!'
And reason answers love, her heart beats fast.
Then will she hide herself and letter too;
The world is naught to her, so he is true."

Extract from 'Prometheus and Epimetheus.'

Behemoth is King of the Enemies of Mankind; Leviathan is his unscrupulous and ruthless confidant. They are conspiring to make away with the Children of God, who had been entrusted to the care of Epimetheus, King of Mortals.

And when the two were left alone together, Behemoth whispered to Leviathan:

"But now the hardest task of all is awaiting us—namely, what we are to do with the children."

On this Leviathan drew a pair of scissors out of his pocket, looked carefully at his left hand held before his eyes, and began, winking, to pare his nails. Then, blowing the dust away, he asked offhand and with apparent astonishment:

"Well, what is there to prevent us from strangling them on the spot?"

At this answer all his breath left the King's lungs and the blood of his veins froze, so that he reeled and staggered, groping with his hands for some support or other.—

And when he had at last gained control of himself, he began to speak again in a fear-choked voice, while his hair stood on end in the extremity of his horror:

"It will befall, if we murder the divine children, that the

thunder will roll, the earth shake, and the graves give up their dead ! "

And Leviathan, still busy filing his nails, smiled as he answered : " After all, the thunder will soon cease to peal, the earth will again come to rest, and the dead after due reflection will return to their underground abodes." But Behemoth shuddered at these words, and his trembling limbs could barely support his body.—

After a pause he began again. " Well, then, if all the people of the land of men turn angrily against us and march to the frontier with raging shouts and gestures, with Epimethus at their head flaunting the paper with my signature, what attitude wilt thou take up, what face wilt thou show to their very justifiable questioning ? "

And Leviathan, still calmly scraping, replied : " My attitude will be to have my hands behind my back, and as for my face, I shall provide it with a straw between my lips."—

This answer, however, did not at all satisfy the King ; his doubts remained, and he spoke with horror and protesting gestures :

" Surely, in all this, we must find a pretext that will give us some shadow of excuse for our outrageous action."

Leviathan laughed aloud, as he answered : " Truly, this task seems to me quite needless, for if they do not find a pretext, they will themselves produce an after-thought, wholly at their own cost and without any trouble on our part."

This assurance, however, gave the King little comfort. And just at this moment was heard the noise announcing the arrival of the divine children in the court, still sleeping peacefully without any suspicion of their cruel fate. Thereupon Behemeth leaped to his feet, cursing bitterly, and going to the door, he turned round and called out in a great hurry, in a voice that nearly failed in its office through the extremity of his anxiety :

" All right, but hold your hand for to-day, and in the evening I will announce my decision."

So saying, he fled into the open air, where he wandered aimlessly over the open fields the livelong day, taking neither

food nor drink, and neither seeing nor hearing what took place before his eyes and ears.

When, however, night and darkness veiled the land, he returned in a very disordered condition, and announced his fateful decision, with quivering lips and chattering teeth :

" Be it, then, as thou sayest ! Let us, however, begin with one only of the children, so that if the race of man is absolutely implacable, we shall still have the other two as hostages, with which we may bargain for our own safety."

And when Leviathan shrugged his shoulders, Behemoth hastily added : " Thou wilt disobey me at thy peril ! Moreover, thou must wait a short time, till I have found a place of refuge, because I should be absolutely incapable of standing the cries of the children while they were being throttled."

So saying, he ran off, almost bereft of his senses, and hid himself behind a woodpile in the barn, pressing both hands tightly over his ears. Leviathan, however, got up calmly and approached his direful task, singing and whistling.

Then came a ghastly moment. Night closed in oppressively, and the tempest moaned like the crying of the damned. Behemoth lay in the barn in deadly fear, praying, and singing, and jerking his limbs about to cover all signs of the murderous work. Soon, however, Leviathan raised him up, and showed him, with grim laughter, a bloody knife.

And, quite beside himself with horror and remorse, the King fell on the ground and asked faintly and almost inaudibly :

" Was the job difficult ? Did the little victim cry out and suffer much ? "

But Leviathan reassured him : " It was as easy as wringing the neck of a pigeon. The boy groaned and whimpered only a very little, and his limbs twitched feebly three times."

With regained courage the King stood up, and stretched himself, and breathed more freely. But once more he questioned :

" Did not the earth quake ? Did not the thunder roar ? Did not the dead rise from their graves ? "

And again he was soothed and reassured by the answer of his servant : " It is true the earth quaked a little behind the

court, near the kitchen, but quite gently and agreeably. The thunder, too, whispered politely in the distance, taking very good care not to disturb the well-earned slumber of any man. The dead also arose from their graves, but they were few in number and had little heart for their job. So after walking once round their graves, they went below again quite contented.

"And if one of them happened to linger, I gave him an admonishing tap on the shoulder."

And having given this message, Leviathan laid both hands on his belly and drew several loud and hearty sighs.

And this sighing somehow or other made Behemoth feel extraordinarily relieved and happy, and he danced up and down quite merrily, until another troublesome thought occurred to him.

"And now, my friend, do not be annoyed if I ask thee to finish thy work, by taking thy stand on the grassy hill near the frontier, to receive, as is thy right and duty, the angry race of men, when on the morrow they ask us, with shouts and threats, to pay the reckoning for the outrage we have committed."

And when the King had spoken, Leviathan went off without demur, filled with a loyal desire to fulfil his master's wish.—

—And next day, true enough, the race of men, in infuriated masses, rushed to the hill, with Epimetheus in the forefront, holding the paper in his right hand, while the Athenians ignominiously brought up the rear. All of them were boiling over with anger and indulging in the most threatening gestures. Leviathan, however, awaited them coolly, with his hands behind his back and a straw between his lips. And it befell that the sight of this straw softened their violent indignation, and gradually converted their loud outcries into whispers, while they began to question him with much more restrained gestures.

And they put all sort of questions, at first with some passion, but afterwards more politely. But when Leviathan remained mute, they also were reduced to silence and began to repent their stiffness and severity.

And so for a while they stood opposite each other without any words passing. Then, all at once, a voice rang out, speaking with well-weighed judgment:

"My dear brethren, what do ye desire? What is the reason that ye are so heated and gesticulate so violently?

"Do not the rafters still stand firm as before? And, see, the brooks are still rippling joyously!"

And they gazed around them with astonishment, and in very sooth the rafters were still standing firm and the brooks were babbling cheerfully, just as of yore. Thereupon they turned away with a smile and went back peacefully to their own homes.

And this time the King walked humbly at the tail of the procession, while the Athenians stalked proudly in the van.

Hour of Temptation.

(From the opening of 'Prometheus the Long-Suffering.')

The day was dusk and drear. No breath of air
Rippled the soundless fog hung everywhere.
The soft-winged hours, on tiptoe, looked askance
And checked their course, as watching Fate's advance,
And fearful silence cowered behind the hedge.
Prometheus, then, by his bare garden's edge
Paced slowly up and down, but all distraught,
Sunk deep in happy and absorbing thought.
So that he saw, unseeing, the one ray
That through the mist had pierced its struggling way,
While close at hand, perched on a leafless tree,
A blackbird sang its dream-like melody.

He lost himself, forgot his guardian will.
His Soul, relieved of check, slipped soft and still
From his control, and in steep flight ascending
Hovered o'erhead, herself with ether blending.
Then uttered one deep cry, with pride elate,
"How little is the World, and Man how great!"
This roused the hero's wrath: "Proud Soul, forbear!
Descend to earth? Such boast thou may'st not dare."
But the bold cry was still laughed far and wide.

And, lo, God's Angel stood close at his side
And spoke : " Prometheus, grief and wrath I feel,
To hear thy Soul's presumptuous laughter peal,
Which, void of shame and redolent of gall,
Sneers at the holy, God-created All.
And so, Prometheus, this is my command,
Since blasphemous thy Soul and out of hand,
That thou get rid of her, whate'er betide,
And in her stead take Conscience as thy guide.
Who'll rule thy actions every passing day
And lead thy steps in virtue's narrow way."

" My Lord and Master, Prince of Earth and Heaven,"
Replies Prometheus, low obeisance given,
" Myself before thy feet I humbly lay,
But this behest I never can obey.
Is my soul blasphemous (who dare deny
The verdict passed by him who is Most High) ?
Still must I cleave to her, for her soft eyes,
So full of human pity, mild and wise,
The warmth of whose chaste flame is warmer far
Than all the heats of earth's wide spaces are,—
The loss of her my force and nerve would banish,
The world turn gray, my very life would vanish."

Yet once again the Angel's voice was heard—
And his grave tone lent urgence to his word—
" If that your pride rebels against command,
A Father's warning it need not withstand.
Long time I secretly have known thy worth
And set thee high above all men of earth.
By day, by night a tireless watch I keep,
Mark deeds done and undone—nay, breaths in sleep.
The test is over and thy value clear ;
The time to show thee favour now is near.
See to it that thou stand not in my way
And lose the prize through will to disobey.
The offer made thee once I make again ;
Such graciousness is surely not in vain.

Wilt thou, or wilt thou not, thy Soul resign,
Taking my counsel, friendly and benign ?
' Tis yes or no, so choose thy words aright.
To weighty question give not answer light."
So spake, and opened wide a brilliant fan
Wherewith he toyed, with no apparent plan,
While its enticing spokes, revolving fast,
The peacock's spread in gorgeous hue surpassed,
And showed all the delights of earthly bliss,
To thirsting eyes that none of them did miss.
Scene after scene. But those most warmly tinted
The whirling fan showed not, but merely hinted.

Now at the magic fan's display he faltered,
And for a moment with his vision paltered.
His strong will oscillated to and fro,
His breast was torn between the yes and no.
At last, his gaze averting, after conflict stark,
He gave his answer, firm, but low and dark ;
" I am but mortal—young and full of zest ;
Ardour and prudence both urge thy behest ;
For what thy heavenly favour means, too well
My grief doth know that tolls its passing bell.
Yet still I may not grasp thy bounteous hand.
Leave me ! Forever with my Soul I stand.
Bring it disaster, if my heart it bruise,
In vain. I can no other than refuse."

" Is that thy final word, thy firm intent ? "
And as all answer failed, the Angel went.
But went with hesitation, loth to go,
And more than once looked back, as if to know
Whether the stubborn will might yet give way,
And even now might hearken and obey.
And when at last he reached the garden-gate,
He set his foot upon a bar, to wait,
And fumbled at his shoe, but awkwardly,
As if the knot he nohow could untie.

SOME ASPECTS OF MODERN SCOTTISH LITERATURE.

By the Lady Margaret Sackville, F.R.S.L.

[Read October 29th, 1930.]

I feel honoured by the opportunity afforded me this afternoon, of addressing the members of the Royal Society of Literature on the recent revival in Scottish letters. To many it will doubtless come as a surprise that such a revival, or indeed anything very distinctive in the way of modern Scottish letters, should exist at all. In a sense Scotland—one side of it at least—is still an unknown country. Although a journey thither is no longer considered the highly dangerous adventure it was in the eighteenth century, when to explore the Highlands was an act of reckless gallantry, yet Scotland expressed through its newly awakened literary and political sense, is still, as far as England is concerned, practically non-existent. The recent remark of a friend who, when certain interesting events were taking place in Edinburgh, expressed the wish that a local paper might be sent to her, since, as she said, "the London papers do not report provincial news," may be considered typical. The relegation of Scotland to the status of a province very broadly represents a certain Southern indifference towards Scottish affairs.

What, after all, *does* the word "Scotland" suggest to the average Englishman who has never troubled very much about the matter? An excellent train service which transports him easily from one capital to the other; porridge, scones, fishing, haggis, whisky, bag-pipes, Burns, Harry Lauder, the Highlander (as he is shown in *Punch*), and (sentimentally) Mary Queen of Scots, Bruce's spider and Sir James Barrie —all making a picturesque jumble in his sub-consciousness. Hardly to be wondered at, since Scotland herself, the superficial, commercialized Scotland has to a large extent played up to this conception. The rebellions and reactions which live beneath the surface are unknown not only to the English, but also to the majority of Scotsmen themselves.

The danger arising from this otherwise harmless tendency of judging a country by *appearances* merely —the polite or boorish countenance it presents to the world—is that certain figures become permanently stereotyped, like the traditional French or Irishman, even (one may add) John Bull himself, when the thing it represents has changed or disappeared. Notably in Ireland has this been the case, where a new Irishman has replaced the irresponsible, light-hearted Paddy of tradition. The old Paddy may exist still, but he is no longer a comprehensive national symbol. Some darker, as yet undefined, element has crept in and made certain readjustments necessary in our estimate of Irishmen. Perhaps when all is said the new Paddy is only the old Paddy with a difference, but it is just the *difference* which is so important. A symbol may continue long after it has ceased to be significant. Such exaggerations, it is

true, *do* precisely catch and explain certain national traits, since after all good caricature is the only quite unescapable form of criticism. A cartoon by Max Beerbohm tells us more about a man or a movement than many volumes. But nations and individuals have their times and tides, their changes of emotion and of mood—though the general characteristic outline does not greatly alter—and a definition true of one generation may only be partially so of another. Movements which start darkly underground at last rise to the surface, modify and change it. Thus it was in Ireland yesterday, and is, though very much less sensationally, in Scotland to-day.

I feel myself particularly well-placed as an observer, since I occupy what I may, perhaps, call an amphibious position between the two countries—that is to say, I can breathe in either with equal ease. This fortunate accident has brought me into contact with a more serious side of Scottish character than is (naturally) manifested in the stage Scotsman or in the easy, mostly farcical literature (of the "Wee MacGreegor" type), which English readers—casual readers, I mean—are apt to think characteristically Scottish. This serious side (sometimes to a Southerner oppressive in its earnestness) combines with a grim disconcerting but very tonic humour, which is not to be found in any other race. You come across it in the ancient ballad poetry, where romance, realism, other-worldliness, pity and terror blend so strangely. With this goes a quality, hardly conceit—rather a sublime form of self-respect—which would permit a Scotsman to converse with an archangel on equal terms. And yet, for all his dispassionate

clear-sightedness, even the most prosaic of Caledonians is romantic in a way which we, who are far less level-headed, can hardly begin to realize. Our critical sense is, I think, æsthetically more developed; he is a cooler critic of conduct and life.

So this serious vein, which always *has* existed in Scotland, in some form or another, though never very articulately as far as the arts are concerned, has now found a new orientation, which shows itself for the moment in the renewed national enthusiasm of a minority. These few, alert men and women, of all ages, classes and political opinions, wearying of that patriotism which expresses itself yearly in Burns' dinners, sentimental or facetious dialect songs or the tartan ornaments displayed during the tourist season in Princes Street, are anxious to save, not only the last remnants of a noble tradition, but simultaneously to create new ones. It is less a question of preserving the past, than of allowing what in the past still remains vital to animate and inspire the present. By no means every Scot feels in this way. He is unlikely to hurl himself headlong into any untried movement. And since it is chiefly through poetry, as far as literature is concerned, that this new impulse finds expression, and the average man in Scotland cares as little about poetry as does the average man anywhere else, it does not move him to any undue enthusiasm. I do not mean this as a reproach. Most people get their poetry directly out of life, even if they are indifferent to poetry in its written form; for poetry must be action before it becomes words. Only a few *can* be sensitive to this very specialized expression. The Scot has a further advantage over more diffident

races. He is less easily persuaded into spending time and money on acquiring a taste for something to which he knows quite well he will always remain indifferent. If he doesn't *want* poetry he doesn't buy it; there's no more to be said. The poet who remarked (fortunately a *Scots* poet, or I should hardly dare to quote him) that "people in Edinburgh do not *buy* books, they borrow them," was only exaggerating a tendency which may, from another point of view, be considered as a national virtue—a natural unwillingness to buy a pig in a poke. Still the number of booksellers in Edinburgh alone proves that Scotsmen *do* buy books, even poetry books. It would be difficult to say though how far they are interested in the recent outbreak of native verse. Domestic rhymes of the 'Bairnies Cuddle Doon' type still represents to many the high-water mark of what reasonable poetry ought to be. Not all the furious missiles of young and leaping genius hurled at their completely unconcerned heads will ever disabuse them of this opinion. There is, of course, no reason whatever *why* people should be brow-beaten by young and leaping genius; they are perfectly right to continue liking 'Bairnies Cuddle Doon' provided it keeps its own place, but it is a little tiresome if such harmless (though I am sure necessary) verse is held up as a standard, and the winged feet of genuine inspiration are forced to flounder impotently in a bog of porridge. It is not the Lion in the Path who blocks the way—rather a large, woolly, complacent, almost immovable sheep. The whole question is one of values; feet have their rights just as much as wings, but they should not get entangled with each other.

Criticism has not, in Scotland, kept pace with creation. That is the trouble with all new movements —perhaps their strength—since the critical sense is the last to awaken, and can only truly function after achievement. It is an elderly sense which does not consort well with enthusiasm. But these particular prophets do certainly seem to have attracted too much attention in their own country and too little outside it. A group of enthusiasts exists who naturally rejoice to hear such a lively outburst when they had believed their country tamed into silence—surprising as a nightingale hatched from a pheasant's egg. On the other hand, they have received little in the way of recognition on this side of the Border. Here we have our own multiplied poets to deal with, so ignorance is excusable. Yet the best work produced in Scotland is at least equal to the same quality of work which has gained a reputation in this country—in some cases better.

This Scottish movement has, of course, its political side (with which I am not concerned). The two impulses always go together. Little has been produced in other directions than poetry—remarkable if we consider that Scottish poets have hitherto been few and far between, whereas Scottish novelists are less rare. A great deal of verse is written in the vernacular. This is largely a work of rescue. It was felt that the genuine Scottish speech is neglected, misused and degraded, and must, without delay, be snatched from the flood of American-English which is not only threatening Scotland, but England as well. (Who knows, that a Cockney poet may not appear someday, to save the last rags of London speech from

the language of Hollywood ?). It was also, very rightly, felt that poetry did not begin and end with Burns, and that potential poets may have lain too long hypnotized into dumbness under the spell of so great a name. The beauty and importance of Middle Scots was also emphasized—a language rich, sonorous and dignified as Latin itself—an incomparable medium for any poet capable of using it, as did Dunbar and Fletcher, in a regal and sumptuous way.

I am not, myself, a student of Middle Scots, and I appreciate the difficulties it presents to a casual or easily discouraged reader. But I have heard it very beautifully read and paid homage to its grave and sombre magnificence. The ordinary vernacular beside it seems like home-spun compared with brocade. It is hardly possible to use Middle Scots again, even for literary purposes; the audience available is necessarily limited. One living Scottish poet, Mr. Lewis Spence, has recaptured the spirit of these early writers in verse, which is like a Scottish claymore in a Renaissance scabbard.

Poets who write in dialect, though the vernacular is rather a *language* than a dialect, must necessarily double the difficulties attending recognition. The Irish writers were not so handicapped, because their medium was not dialect, but a charming and easily understood idiom. The vernacular is prohibitive to the uninitiated, who are found even amongst the poet's fellow-countrymen. To write in the vernacular is an heroic gesture on the part of a poet, who thus deliberately isolates himself for the sake of his enthusiasms from the larger portion of the world, yet so vivid, warm, expressive and human a language is

Braid Scots, that many dead poems, through its agency, become glowing and alive. It is a medium which, like clay in the sculptor's hand, can be moulded almost visibly by the poet into any shape he chooses. I have heard Scotland described as a Paradise for poets, because there the words "to," "from," and "have"—"tae," "frae" and "hae"—can all be rhymed together. But the matter of writing good vernacular poetry is not quite as simple as all that. At the same time, it can be used as bad cooks use sauces, in order to disguise their cooking—that is to say, it may cover a multitude of deficiencies in imagination and ideas.

That the vernacular is, after all, their native expression, fitting the shape and colour of their thought easily and instinctively, is proved by the fact that many otherwise admirable Scottish poets become dull-sententious and mediocre whenever they attempt to write in English. Burns, in his English poems, is like a man cutting artificial roses out of tissue paper. Prof. Alexander Gray, a poet in the movement, has translated Heine into Scots, and though it is difficult to imagine this sophisticated genius reborn in such homely speech, these translatings are quite surprisingly vivid and successful. A few poets can write equally well in both languages, but they are exceptions.

Apart from dialect, there *does* exist a Scottish mentality which is a thing wholly independent of dialect, as clear, definite and unchanging as the outlines of Arthur's Seat—as unshakeable as Edinburgh Castle Rock. It is a matter of mind and of spirit, a certain mental angle which would make a Scotsman recognizable in the middle of the Sahara. Some

recent Scottish writings bear this stamp, but much of it is only indistinctly Scottish, a contributory stream to the main current of contemporary literature.

Fiction is, next to poetry, the most promising growth. Mr. Neil Gunn's 'Grey Tide' has created much stir on both sides of the border. In drama one or two good plays, but nothing of importance has yet been produced. It is strange that drama, which loomed so largely in the Irish movement, should occupy so small a space in this. And yet a keen dramatic sense *must* somewhere exist in the Scottish subconsciousness, or the Ballads could never have come about. Perhaps the shadow of Calvin still lies upon the theatre, and such tenacious ghosts are not easily exorcised.

When it comes to analysing the work of individual poets, I should say, as far as my own judgment is concerned (and nothing is more disputable than judgment in verse), that Lewis Spence, William Jeffrey, Robert Crawford and Marion Angus are the names which shine out most clearly amongst a Milky Way of lesser stars. I am speaking of those poets actually *living* in Scotland at present. Others, such as Mr. C. M. Grieve, are exiles, voluntary or otherwise.

I should like, with your permission, to give a few examples from the poets themselves, and by way of introduction I will quote Rachel Annand Taylor's 'Princess of Scotland,' which, though its author is not, as far as I am aware, connected with the movement, seems to strike the right imaginative note.

"THE PRINCESS OF SCOTLAND.

"'Who are you that so strangely woke,
And raised a fine hand?'
Poverty wears a scarlet cloak
In my land.

"'Duchies of dreamland, emerald, rose,
Lie at your command?'
Poverty like a princess goes
In my land.

"'Wherefore the mask of silken lace
Tied with a golden band?'
Poverty walks with wanton grace
In my land.

"'Why do you softly, richly speak
Rhythm so sweetly-scanned?'
Poverty hath the Gaelic and Greek
In my land.

"'There's a far-off scent about you seems
Born in Samarkand.'
Poverty hath luxurious dreams
In my land.

"'You have wounds that like passion-flowers you hide:
I cannot understand.'
Poverty hath one name with Pride
In my land.

"'Oh! will you draw your last sad breath
'Mid bitter bent and sand?'
Poverty only begs from Death
In my land."

Lewis Spence, a fine artist (misused and harassed word!), writes verse sumptuous as Venetian velvet, keen-edged as a Toledo blade. His Muse has come to Scotland by way of the Court of Lorenzo the Magnificent. Imaginatively he sees (in one of his finest poems) Edinburgh and Venice kiss. It is all a matter of atmosphere of rich suggestion. To him magic is all in all in poetry. "Beauty," so he declares in—

"Bride or Handmaiden?

"Beauty ever was designed
To thrill the heart and not the mind,
To speak to the immediate blood,
But never to the pensive mood.

"And when I hear one say that thought
Has been to him by Beauty brought,
I know that Beauty in his house
Has dwelt as servant, not as spouse."

The two following poems are both characteristic:

"Naples at Dalmeny.

"Silence and myriad sweetness where the sea
Floods round the pedestals of stately woods.
The honey of June winds in nimble moods
Blows mildly down this league of liberty,
The air's great temple pillared by the tree,
As when Rome's sandals woke the solitudes.
Now on its ancient hold once more intrudes
Passionate, sublime, the spirit of Italy.

"As some fantastical and tropic bird
Blown hence by winds, there falls upon the bay
The rapture of a Neapolitan hour.
This is a sister to the breeze that stirred
The streets of Herculaneum yesterday
And kissed the rose in some Vesuvian bower."

He is at his best in those poems, 'The Grey Etin,' for example, which express his passionate, at times exasperated, love of Scotland, but these, mainly in in Middle Scots, only the poet himself can adequately interpret.

"AUTUMNAL.

"I have loved autumn as an amethyst
Set into cunning silver, and her mist
Dimming the golden trees to goblin treasure,
The exquisite slow measure
Of leaf-fall in her visionary rains,
Her brooks, those passionate veins
That rush like rapture in a poet's blood,
I have loved and understood.

"What though the sheep upon the distant hills
The first white footfalls of the winter seem?
He lives, who feels this last irradiate gleam,
A thousand summers, and its magic stills
Winter forever in his heart. I hear
The phoenix-fabled burning of the year,
And summer's soul, a rainbow-feathered ghost,
Soar to that secret coast
Where the unnumbered seasons have their sphere."

William Jeffrey is a young poet of courageous and noble inspiration. His master is Wordsworth; his verse peculiarly his own. He displays a *largeness* of imagination which is nowadays rare. He works on a large canvas, and his ambition soars high. These few

stanzas from a poem written at Dove Cottage will give some idea of the spaciousness and gravity which mark his verse :

"At Dove Cottage.

"The April sun is on the hills without,
Pied lambs are sporting, daffodils in play
Bend low beneath the wind's rejoicing shout ;
The very rooms of this old house are gay.

"The turning stars, the dawning of the year
Still centre here, and clouds and birds that fly ;
Here didst thou live, O maker of austere
And haughty musics for the days gone by.

"Thy mind was nurtured on fixt majesties,
August reflections of a dreaming hour ;
In joint progression sped thine earth and skies,
And poised was thy calm world upon a flower.

"But we dare not rejoice as thou rejoiced,
Nor be of all things certain as wert thou ;
Nature and mind must fuse, be subtler voiced,
Have richer content ere they charm us now.

"Appearance pleased thee, and the bulk of things ;
Thou held'st no brief for molten rock beneath ;
We care, as thou didst not, for folded wings
That lie concealed within the egg's frail sheath.

"With newts, with apes, with serpents of the seas
We seek communion, and the obscene dream ;
We would upbuild a harmony from these,
And join all good and evil in one stream.

"Yet what imports our seeking ? What our gain ?
We lodge in Petra and despoil the Nile,
With grey abstractions netting earth and brain ;
Upon our living flesh dead rags we pile.

"From wide confusion how might union spring ?
How might refreshing winds blow through the heart ?
Canst teach us, vanished poet, how the wing
Of harmony might out of chaos dart ?

"Deeper we mine than thou didst, higher climb,
Yet from thy simpleness thou reach'st thine end ;
So might'st thou yet be pilot to our time
And earth with brain organically blend."

Robert Crawford,* at one time a working miner, is a born writer of sonnets. His 'Eve Sonnet Sequence' is a masterpiece of delicacy and strength. The three following short poems, a lyric, a love poem and an epitaph (alas, that I have only an English accent wherein to render it), are very characteristic of his genius. He is one of the few poets who is as much at home in English as he is in Scots.

"A Bit of Ayrshire.

"Wrought of her fields and kindled on her stone,
A bit of Ayrshire I, in flesh and bone,
My heart's far-gathered memories unfold
My genesis from rock and grass and mould.

"The sea that chugs and pushes at her breast
Is not mere water, but the chaliced west
Of stored-up suns, and hoarded gloaming fires,
My pensive heritage from dreaming sires.

"For by each leafy hedge, when it is June,
Those old sires do their courting to a tune
They left me in my blood—an heirloom thrill,
Gleaned from old burned-out wests, which yet I spill."

* It is sad to have to record the death of Robert Crawford in June this year.

"Oh! Slender One.

"Oh! Slender One, soft-lilac clad,
Just for a touch my hands are mad.

"Your eyes release electric rain
Of blue-fire to my every vein.

"I am afraid my heat will brand
If carelessly you touch my hand.

"You, cooler than a drop of dew,
Yet parch my depths with sight of you.

"Oh! Dew, wherein I fain would sink,
Just touch my hand and let me drink."

"On C.

"She needs nae stane,
But just a rose
That will speak o' her,
When it blows.
An' she will rise
Afore me, plain,
As naething could
That's carved in stane."

Marion Angus has re-incarnated, not imitated, the old Ballads. Her poems also need to be given in the Scots (which I cannot do), but I think the eerie suggestion of the following poem, 'Jealousy,' will survive even my English rendering of it.

"Jealousy.

"The new mune sma' an' slim,
The win'-blawn leaf on the pane;
I micht hae gotten sleep
But for they eerie twain.

"For she wis like a leaf,
Blawn oot o' the windy morn,
Wi' her wan new mune o' a face,
Amang the stookit corn.

"Waes me! I turned ma heid
Frae her tear-begrutten e'en;
Sae clear they were as the burn
Whaur it rins ower mosses green.

"She s'uld hae hed the plaid,
Pit bye in the kist lang syne,
But for her yalla hair,
Her fit ower slicht and fine.

"(The wee reid hungerry mou',
It s'uld hae hed bite and sup,
But I hae seen the bee
Ower aft at the rose's cup.)

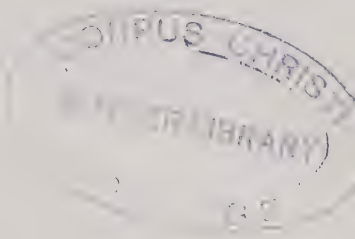
"My skin is broun as a toad,
E'en hae I shairp's a shrew,
Ma hert is bleck an' coorse,
Coorse thro' an thro'.

"For better ye wad hae fared,
Ma bonnie young barefit quean,
Hedna the lad I lo'e
Cum whistling' ower the green.

"I lies awauk wi' the mune,
Wi' the wind-blawn leaf on the pane;
I micht hae gotten sleep,
But for yon eerie twain."

Here my brief review of the Scottish movement ends. Not that the subject is exhausted. In the time at my disposal I have dealt only with the more outstanding names. There are others of whom

we may hear later. It would be absurd to make extravagant claims or exaggerate achievement, but I hope I may have said enough to persuade you that Scottish letters are sufficiently alive to-day to deserve watching with sympathy. Flowers which blossom with difficulty in northern air may, for that very reason, outlive some of the softer blossoms of easier summers.



Charlotte Carmichael Stopes.

Hon. F.R.S.Litt.

CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL STOPES:
SOME ASPECTS OF HER LIFE AND WORK.

By Frederick S. Boas, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.L.

[Read May 21st, 1930.]

Prefatory Note.

I have prepared this commemorative paper dealing with some aspects of the life and work of Mrs. C. C. Stopes, at the request of her daughter, Dr. Marie Stopes, who put at my disposal the large mass of printed and manuscript materials left by Mrs. Stopes. The somewhat laborious task of going through these was mainly undertaken by her friend, Miss Gwendolen Murphy, who has contributed the valuable Bibliographical List that follows this paper.

Such details of the private life of Mrs. Stopes as are mentioned have been supplied by her daughter. My long and stimulating intercourse with her was almost entirely in public, at the meetings of various societies in which we were both interested. The devotion which she inspired in her intimate friends was expressed by several of them in speeches after the reading of this paper. My aim in it has been to pay a tribute to the work of an eminent woman, who was for seventeen years an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

Charlotte Carmichael was born on February 6th, 1841, in Edinburgh. She was a daughter of J. F. Carmichael, a landscape painter, who had close family associations with Sir Walter Scott. J. F. Carmichael's father was a Writer to the Signet in Edinburgh, and was assistant and afterwards partner and successor in Scott's legal business. Sir Walter was on terms of intimate friendship with the family. Dr. Marie Stopes has in her possession a beautiful silver teapot out of which he took tea nearly every Sunday afternoon with her great-grandmother for many years. Dr. Stopes possesses another highly treasured relic, the ink bottle used in the composition of the early 'Waverley Novels' when Scott stayed late at the office. Lady Scott embroidered with her own hands Charlotte Carmichael's christening robe, which was worn in turn by her daughter, Marie.

Thus Charlotte Carmichael may be said to have been cradled into letters, and even in her 'teens she began to write stories for young people. A collection of these, two hundred pages in all, was published by Chambers in 1861, under the title 'Alice Errol and Other Tales.'

From a set of testimonials, of which some copies are still extant, dated in the 'sixties and 'seventies of the last century, we learn that "Miss Carmichael was educated at several of the best schools and classes in Edinburgh, and finished at Mr. Oliphant's. She spent one session at the Normal School, for the benefit of the training, and passed the Government Examination there." This was no doubt to qualify herself for teaching, in which she soon became engaged. We are told that "she had the charge of all the classes

in the late Miss Brodie's school, Huntly, for six months during that lady's illness; and had also much experience through assisting her mother in her private classes for young ladies." She also acted as a private governess, and evidently gave great satisfaction. Professor George Lawson, whose children she had taught in Edinburgh, writes from Kingston, Canada, on April 27th, 1860, "It gives me much pleasure to state that I know her to be an intelligent and accomplished young lady, very well qualified for her duties; and likely from her acquirements, as well as on account of her pleasing manners and amiable disposition, to prove a favourite in whatever position she may be placed." And there are later testimonials up to 1870 on similar lines.

She seized every opportunity of developing her powers. She joined in 1865 a literary society conducted by a number of young women in Edinburgh, which still exists. It was this or a similar association that began to issue in 1866 'The Attempt,' a literary magazine, conducted by members of the Edinburgh Essay Society. To this magazine Charlotte Carmichael contributed for eight years, under the pseudonym of "Lutea Reseda." Her first paper was one of a couple of pages on 'Cotton Grass.' Many followed on very various subjects, including a series in 1869 on 'Medieval Chivalry,' and another on 'George Eliot's Characters' in 1874. Her last contribution in that year was on 'Murillo's Holy Family.'

She felt during her early years a sense of wrong at the fact that her brother might go to the University and did not care to do so, whereas she wanted to

join but was not admitted. In 1867, however, a Society for the University Education of Women was formed in Edinburgh, and extra-mural courses of lectures were arranged. Professor Masson gave the first course, and in the following session there were three courses by Masson on English Literature, by Professor Fraser on Logic and Psychology, and by Professor Tait on "Experimental Physics." Miss Carmichael took them all, and distinguished herself in the first two. In the following autumn, when the first English College for women (afterwards removed to Girton) was about to be opened at Hitchin, Madame Bodieleon wrote to her friend Mrs. Daniell, Honorary Secretary to the Society in Edinburgh, and asked her to try to encourage some of the girls who had done well to come up. Someone, whose name is now unknown, offered through Mrs. Daniell a sum of three hundred pounds to Miss Carmichael in the nature of a Bursary, on condition that she would enrol herself for a three years' course at Hitchin. She was much interested in the idea, but had many home ties, and was now content with what her own University had begun to do for her. Some of her class-fellows, however, did go south to join the first batch of women students there. In Edinburgh for several years Miss Carmichael attended the various classes, and distinguished herself in most of them, especially in the essays. She was the first woman in Scotland to gain a Certificate in Arts, in three subjects of the M.A. standard; and later she took the Diploma in seven subjects, which was then the nearest equivalent to a degree obtainable by a woman.

In 1879 she married Mr. Henry Stopes, F.G.S., of Colchester. They spent a year's honeymoon in Egypt and Asia Minor, and visited Palestine, Greece and Southern Europe. In Egypt, while going up the Nile with Prof. Sayce, Henry Stopes discovered the first palaeolith found in that country. A controversy followed, but later discoveries have substantiated Stopes's conviction that Egypt was a home of Palaeolithic man. His collection of stone implements, as his daughter writes, was " a great feature of our home life, and we children as well as mother were all employed in washing, sorting and arranging the specimens."

Some interesting records by Mrs. Stopes of this honeymoon journey still survive. Among them is the manuscript account, entitled, ' An English Dinner-Party in an Arab Hareem,' of a visit to the household of the Mafetish of Magaga, an Egyptian official. There are vivid sketches of the Mafetish himself, his wife and the three widows of his father. The beginning of the dinner is thus described :

" Two black slaves came round, one carrying a basin and the other a ewer of warm water scented with roses, which they poured over our hands, and we dried them with a second table-napkin provided for the purpose. The first course then came in. The soup tureen was set right in the centre of the table, and with our own spoons we helped ourselves from it to a few spoonfuls of a white, richly-flavoured mutton-soup. The meat that had been boiled in it was then set on a plate, and we pulled off a few pieces with our fingers, dipped it in the common salt-cellar and ate it. I did not like to use a knife and fork when nobody else did, fearing to offend, and so rubbed my fingers as clean as possible on the table-napkin."

The whole paper was printed many years afterwards in 'The Woman's Signal,' March 4th and 11th, 1897.

On their return journey in the summer of 1880 Mr. and Mrs. Stopes visited the Ober-Ammergau Passion-play. An article describing the visit was written by Mrs. Stopes, and a printed proof of this is still extant, with MS. corrections and with the heading, "Put in type by the Editor of 'Life and Work,' but not published, as the Committee objected to the subject appearing in the pages of that magazine." The Committee's scruples, which seem strange to us fifty years later, deprived the readers of the magazine of one of Mrs. Stopes's most attractive occasional writings. The following extract is of special interest in its contrast between her impressions of the play and of Jerusalem, which she had recently visited :

"The purity and simplicity of the acting, the wonderful harmony of the whole, the realism of its parts, produced an effect quite unique upon the imagination. . . . I had tried to realize the past in the Jerusalem of the present, but found it not. One loses imagination and gains no realities there ; but at Ober-Ammergau one finds a tangible reality that strengthens imagination. For can we not, even in that densely-crowded theatre, imagine ourselves one of the crowds that thronged to see the Nazarene ? Could not these hills of the Ammer valley be those that lie about Jerusalem ; is it not possible that these vistas on the stage were the veritable streets of Jerusalem ? Verily, when taken along with the actors, they suffice us, as the Jerusalem of the present never can. The actors are not like ordinary players that appear on a worldly stage in a new character every night ; and each one totally apart from their lives. They are honest peasants, chiefly wood-carvers, who, in designing the figures of the Gospel narrative, have acquired artistic ideas of grouping

and position; they are men who have been chosen for some resemblance to the character they are to represent, either in appearance or power; and in keeping constantly to this character and to this piece, they daily become more and more like it, until one can recognize them, at first sight, in their ordinary avocation, by the name they hold in this extra-ordinary one.

"This identification of the imagined and the real, added to close study and careful teaching, throws life into the conception, such as no other play ever had."

On the return of Mr. and Mrs. Stopes to England they settled in Upper Norwood, where they had two daughters born to them. Mrs. Stopes neglected none of the domestic duties, so that for some years after her marriage she could find time for study only by giving up gaieties. She felt keenly the change from the more centralized and stimulating life of the northern capital to the typical London suburban atmosphere, half a century ago. So, within two months of her arrival in Upper Norwood, she founded a Discussion Society, a Shakespeare Reading Society and a Logic Class, all meeting in her house, which she also threw open to Drawing Room Meetings on any subjects likely to interest women, such as Women in Local Government, Women's Suffrage and Rational Dress. In the 'Rational Dress Society's Gazette,' 1888, she had two papers on 'Some Effects of Dress on Health,' and on 'Beauty and Fitness.' The same 'Gazette,' in October, 1889, has accounts of papers read by her on 'Errors in Women's Dress,' before the British Association at Newcastle, and at an International Congress of Women in Paris.

The 'Gazette' states that her paper at Newcastle was "very well received, and an interesting discussion

ensued, Miss Lydia Becker again ranging herself on the side of stays or corsets. Dr. Wilberforce Smith showed diagrams illustrating the natural size of the waist, and the size when pulled in by corsets. . . . Mrs. Stopes in replying to the discussion told the audience that she had visited two of the Court dressmakers in London, in the past year, and she was very thankful to hear them say, ' Do you know, madam, that tight-lacing is beginning to go out ? ' "

The cause of Women's Suffrage occupied a still larger share of her thoughts and energies. Deeply impressed by the value of Sydney Smith's pamphlet, ' The Enfranchisement of Women the Law of the Land,' she set herself to study old records, law books, manuscripts, and parliamentary journals bearing on the subject. The facts which she thus gleaned she embodied in a little volume called ' British Freewomen : Their Historical Privilege,' May, 1894. The whole first edition, paper-bound, was bought by Miss Helen Blackburn, and many copies were sent to members of the House of Commons before the division in that year. She sent a copy of her expanded second edition published in July to Queen Victoria, who graciously accepted it, and read it. Further enlarged editions appeared in 1907 and 1909. She delivered hundreds of lectures on behalf of Women's Suffrage all over the country. In 1896 the Scottish Suffrage Society sent her on a long lecturing tour round the northern towns, and in the same year she read a paper, ' The Women's Protest ' at a trade conference. In 1907 she wrote a 64-page pamphlet, ' The Sphere of Man in Relation to that of Woman in the Constitution,' and in the following year an article in the September

'Fortnightly Review' on 'The Constitutional Basis of Women's Suffrage,' which was reprinted and sold for one penny.

Any picture of Mrs. Stopes's public career would be imperfect which did not give some short account of the part she played in these historical feminist controversies. But within the first decade after she had taken up her residence in Norwood, she had become involved in what was to be her main life-work, the study of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and their social background. She had immediately become a member of the New Shakspere Society founded by F. J. Furnivall in 1874, where she met many kindred spirits, including her life-long friend Miss Grace Latham. In 1888 she began her contributions to Elizabethan scholarship with a volume on 'The Bacon-Shakespeare Question,' in which of course she championed the orthodox position. She lived long enough to see the birth of an even stranger heresy, which for the moment has its devotees, that the plays and poems were the work of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford.

In 1890 she took sides in a controversy in which she bore a part on and off for more than thirty years. In 1832 James Boaden had suggested that the friend to whom Shakespeare addresses most of his Sonnets was William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. This theory was revived by Thomas Tyler in a paper read at the New Shakspere Society in 1890, in which "the dark lady" was identified with Mary Fitton, who was Pembroke's mistress. The sequel must be told in Mrs. Stopes's own words in the Preface to her 'Life of Southampton':

" Everybody present was in sympathetic admiration of such a neatly fitted group of interesting facts, supposed to be connected with each other, and they all, including Dr. Furnivall, accepted it. As I said good-bye to Mr. Tyler, I said, 'I hope I may live long enough to be able to contradict you.' 'No you won't, for my theory is going down Time.' 'Not if I live long enough,' said I, in full faith that evidence must be forthcoming to confute a theory so injurious to the good name of Shakespeare."

Her meaning, read in the light of what she wrote later, was that it is " injurious " to Shakespeare to assume that after the words used in his dedication of 'Lucrece' to Southampton he could have transferred his affections to Pembroke. " Shakespeare had no second dream : all his songs and praises were addressed

To one, of one, still such and ever so.

This seems to me, whatever our views may be on the Sonnets, very perilous reasoning, but it was the basis of Mrs. Stopes's championship of Southampton, in reviews and articles ; in a paper read before this Society on June 24th, 1908 ; in a preface to the Sonnets (1904) ; and finally in the 'Life' of the Earl (1922). But she was at any rate in so far a true prophet that Tyler's theory has not gained ground, and does not seem to be going " down Time."

She bore off the honours, too, in an incident at a somewhat later date, of which she gives an amusing account in the same Preface :

" A small portrait, asserted to be contemporary, of the 3rd Earl of Pembroke had been offered to the then existing holder of the title for sale at a reasonable price. On the back

a slip of paper was pasted containing the quotation from Sonnet LXXXI,

> ' Your monument shall be my gentle verses
> Which [eyes yet not created shall o'er read].'

The Earl of Pembroke invited certain leaders in art, literature and criticism, to meet at his house and give him their opinion. Dr. Furnivall, having a card for himself and a friend, took me as his friend.

" The portrait was handed round, examined and accepted by all as genuine and worth buying. It was handed round for a second time, in regard to the inscription. I do not remember the remarks made. I was last and when it reached me I said, ' The ink which wrote that was made in 1832,' thinking of the publication of Boaden's theory. This caused a commotion. Dr. Furnivall laughingly cried : ' I forgot ! Turn her out, turn her out. She is a Southamptonite. We are all Pembrokians here.' "

There is another controversial matter on which Mrs. Stopes took persistently what I confidently believe was the wrong side—the question of the disputed Revels Accounts for 1604–5 and 1611–12. All students know how these were printed by Peter Cunningham in 1842 ; how when he attempted to sell them in 1868, they fell under the suspicion of the British Museum and Record Office officials ; how Halliwell-Phillipps proved that Malone, before Cunningham was born, was acquainted with at least the substance of the 1604–5 list. A new stage in the discussion was opened by the late Mr. Ernest Law, who induced the Record Office to conduct chemical and microscopical tests of the ink, with results in favour of the genuineness of the documents. He set out this new evidence in ' Some Supposed Shakespeare

Forgeries ' (1911). His conclusions were attacked in a series of articles in ' The Athenaeum ' at intervals from July 22nd, 1911, to August 10th, 1912. These were signed " Audi Alteram Partem," and were (as was known to some at the time) from the pen of Mrs. Stopes. Some eight years later she returned to the attack in a series of letters in *The Times Literary Supplement* between December 30th, 1920, and February 24th, 1921, and she finally summed up her views in a Shakespeare Association pamphlet on the ' Seventeenth Century Accounts of the Masters of the Revels.' The question involves a number of technical points, including discrepancies between the Revels Accounts and those of the Treasurer of the Chamber. But the late Mr. Wood, of the Manuscripts Department of the British Museum, and Mr. A. E. Stamp, the Deputy Keeper of the Rolls, have, from different points of view, strengthened the evidence for the genuineness of the documents, which help us to date ' Othello,' ' Measure for Measure,' ' The Tempest,' and ' The Winter Tale ' among " Shaxberd's " plays. There appears to be no one now of repute who upholds the forgery theory except the gladiatorial Dr. Tannenbaum of New York.

Here Mrs. Stopes put her money on the wrong horse and characteristically kept on backing it to the end. She was more fruitfully employed in her investigations into the Revels documents of an earlier period, when William Hunnis was Master of the Children of the Chapel, and his boys performed at Court between 1568 and 1585. She was at work on Hunnis as early as 1892, when she published an article on him, and she summed up all that she had collected

and conjectured about him in a volume which appeared in 1910 in W. Bang's 'Materialen des älteren Englischen Dramas," published at Louvain. Nearly all the copies perished when Louvain was taken by the Germans. Mrs. Stopes in this first full-dress biography of Hunnis broke new ground and made a contribution of much value to the study of the man and his surroundings, though she was inclined to assign to him anonymous plays of which his authorship is very doubtful. 'Jacob and Esau' in particular is, I think, much more likely to be from the pen of Nicholas Udall.

But it was not in the dramatic records of the Court, or in the history of the London theatres, that Mrs. Stopes was to find the field for her most distinctive and memorable work. I don't know how soon it was after 1880 that she began to be a pilgrim to Stratford-on-Avon. But in 1891 she wrote "Stratford Letters" to a Philadelphia magazine during the Shakespeare festival week, and again in 1896. It is a testimony to the glamour exercised by Warwickshire that this daughter of Edinburgh, with no previous country associations, and nursed on traditions of Scott and the Waverleys, at once fell under its spell. It was on the Shakespeare of Stratford and his environment that she was henceforward to expend her happiest industry and her most mature powers. The first of her volumes in what I may call the Stratford series was 'Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries' (1897), a set of twelve articles which appeared originally in the *Stratford-on-Avon Herald*. Among these contemporaries were Richard Field, the printer, three Sir Thomas Lucys, Edward

Arden and Dr. John Hall. A second enlarged issue included among others Michael Drayton, the Cloptons and the Combes. This was followed in 1901 by 'Shakespeare's Family: Being a Record of the Ancestors and Descendants of William Shakespeare with some account of the Ardens.' Many articles on kindred genealogical and other themes were collected together in 'Shakespeare's Environment' (1914), of which a second enlarged edition appeared in 1918. Between these two editions she had collected another series of articles of a more miscellaneous Shakespearean or Elizabethan interest in a volume which took its title from the first of its contents—'Shakespeare's Industry' (1916).

It was this volume, in particular, that gained her the award by the British Academy of the Rose Crawshay Prize, and I believe that it is on her researches during the twenty years between 1897 and 1916 into the external facts of the lives of Shakespeare, his family, his neighbours and his friends that her reputation will chiefly rest. She spared no pains in hunting up the original documents in London, Stratford and elsewhere. As she says herself, after 1889 she devoted herself altogether to manuscript work. She did not, as far as I know, make any single sensational "find" like Professor Feuillerat's of the documents concerning the first Blackfriars Theatre; or Professor C. W. Wallace's of the lawsuit mentioning Shakespeare as resident with the Mountjoys; or Professor Hotson's of the coroner's inquest on Marlowe. But she added largely in detail to our knowledge of Shakespeare's antecedents and environment. Here I may quote the recent testimony of

Mr. E. I. Fripp in his 'Shakespeare's Stratford' (1928): "To Mrs. Stopes we owe in large measure the challenge to the authority of the late Halliwell-Phillipps . . . and his poor estimate of the town and the people. I often do not agree with her. I gratefully acknowledge the assistance I have received from her fearless researches."

Whatever her immediate subject, whether in Warwickshire or London, it was always Shakespeare whom she had primarily in view. "I wanted," as she says in the Preface to 'Burbage and Shakespeare's Stage' (1913), "to get a more thorough knowledge of Shakespeare than I had." She turned aside to write about Hunnis "because he was the designer of the main Kenilworth devices which I believe stimulated young Shakespeare's imagination," and if she devoted a volume to the Burbages, it was because it was James Burbage who "gave Shakespeare the chance to make the best of the life he had not willingly chosen, and . . . was able to do this because he himself always tried to do the best possible to him under his circumstances." The volume, half of which is a narrative, and half a collection of documentary authorities, was somewhat hurriedly completed and brought out to further the scheme of raising a memorial to the Burbages in Shoreditch Church. Some of us were present at the dedication ceremony.

Again the labour that occupied so much of her later years on the 'Life of Henry, third Earl of Southampton" (1922) was expended on him as "Shakespeare's Patron." As she confesses in her preface, "I did not start this work for his sake but in the hope that I might find more about Shakespeare:

which hope has not been gratified." But the career of the Earl is full of interest in many other ways—his love-affairs ; his association with Essex in the Irish campaign and the abortive rising in the City ; his connection with the Virginia Company and English adventure in the New World. These provided Mrs. Stopes with attractive themes in what was to be her last major publication. Shakespeare was probably the only theme that in her later days could inspire her to write verse as in her contribution to the Tercentenary 'Book of Homage' in 1916. Sir Israel Gollancz's characteristic acknowledgment of it is still preserved. "This is *excellent*—quite beyond my expectation, to put it frankly—and though I've too much verse, this must go into the 'Book.'"

It was fitting that some ten years later, again under the editorship of Sir Israel, her last published work should deal with "Early Records Illustrating the Personal Life of Shakespeare." It had been delivered as a lecture before the Shakespeare Association on May 15th, 1925, and included eighteen sections, mainly of biographical interest. Together with Dr. Greg's Tercentenary paper on Edward Alleyn it was included in the 1927 Shakespeare Association Volume, which otherwise was mainly concerned with Shakespeare's Theatre.

I have passed rapidly over an immense range of work which, if we include the girlish effusions in Edinburgh, covers more than sixty years. This work, even if we confine ourselves to her more mature output, had serious drawbacks. Mrs. Stopes had not the gift of completely organizing the materials that she so assiduously collected. She sometimes seems their

servant rather than their mistress. If we may slightly adapt the words in 'Twelfth Night,' she

> "Like the haggard, checks at every feather
> That comes before her eye."

She seems afraid of wasting anything of what she has gathered with so much pains, and she piles up her facts till at times we cannot see the wood for the trees. Hence the epigram, perhaps a little too caustic, of an acute critic :—

> "The making of a good book, as distinct from writing a book with a great deal of good in it, was not within her scope."

If she had been willing to sacrifice some of the minor articles and notes that she had written, her collected volumes would have had a more artistic unity.

And while she was engaged in some of her more minute researches, she missed, either through lack of a certain *flair* for discovery or through sheer ill-luck, some golden opportunities. Thus in 1905, as she relates in the Preface to her 'Burbage,' she wanted to inspect the Loseley papers, but the owner was abroad, and she said she would wait. "There is always something to do in research work." And the consequence was that Professor Feuillerat, and not Mrs. Stopes, discovered the documents concerning the first Blackfriars Theatre.

Again, Professor C. W. Wallace in 1905 was able to get hold at the Public Record Office of uncalendared papers of the Court of Requests for which, as she complains, she had asked three or four times

in vain, and which were found to contain new Shakespearean things. Then at last she, too, got them, and " I could see *the things for myself*, which is after all the genuine object of research study."

In these words we have the key to all that is best in Mrs. Stopes's work. She never took anything at second hand. She went to the fountain-head, and her aim was truth. Even when some of us thought her wrong and somewhat obstinate, as in the matter of the Revels accounts, we never doubted her sincerity and singleness of mind. And she followed learning for its own sake, without thought of material reward or of honours. Some of the latter fell to her—the British Academy's Rose Crawshay Prize, the Honorary Fellowship of this Society, the Vice-Presidency of the Elizabethan Literary Society, for the first time bestowed on a woman. I think some University would have done well to recognize her work with an honorary degree.

But the woman was, I feel, greater in a sense than her work. From her youngest days, as student and teacher, to February 6th, 1929, which closed a life of devoted industry, carried on in spite of growing weakness and failing eyesight—a scholar's worst cross—she " followed the gleam." We may then in this Society fitly commemorate her to-day, and close with the words of the sympathetic memoir-writer in *The Times* of February 7th, 1929 : " The Royal Society of Literature has lost a distinguished veteran among its Fellows, and the study of Shakespeare a brave and devoted servant."

APPENDIX.

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL LIST OF THE WRITINGS OF CHARLOTTE CARMICHAEL STOPES.

Compiled by Gwendolen Murphy.

Prefatory Note.

The following pseudonyms were used by Mrs. Stopes: Lutea Reseda (1861–1874 *in* '*The Attempt*'), *C. Graham* (1888 *in* '*Wine, Spirit and Beer*'), *Ursa Major* (1896 *in* '*Mark Lane Express*'), *Audi Alteram Partem* (1911 *in* '*The Athenaeum*').

Contributions to periodicals, which are later reprinted in book form, are not noted under their first occurrence, nor are separately-issued offprints (*chiefly from the* '*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*' *or the* '*Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature,*') *recorded, with one exception,* '*The True Story of the Shakespeare Bust*' (1904).

'*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*' *is used to represent* '*Jahrbuch der Deutschen Shakespeare-Gesellschaft*' *im Auftrage des Vorstandes herausgegeben von Alois Brandl und Max Förster . . . Berlin.*

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2. Sir Thomas Lucy the Elder, the Real and the Traditional.

3. Sir Thomas Lucy the Second.
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5. John Somerville of Edreston.
6. Edward Arden.
7. Sir John Conway of Arrow.
8. The Throgmortons.
9. The Grevilles and Lord Brooke.
10. The Nevilles.
11. Dr. John Hall.
12. Conclusion.

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8. Edmund Neville [for 10 above].
13. Michael Drayton.
14. The Trussells of Billesley.
15. The Cloptons.
16. The Combes.
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18. The Clergy of Stratford.
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12. Contemporary Warwickshire Shakespeares.
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POLITICS AND CHARACTER IN SHAKESPEARE'S 'JULIUS CAESAR.'

By Sir Mark Hunter, M.A., D.Litt., F.R.S.L.

[Read October 30th, 1929.]

In the simple classification of the First Folio, Shakespeare's Roman plays are included in the third division of the book, that is amongst the *Tragedies*, not in the second division, that of the *Histories*. There is, of course, ample warrant for this arrangement, but, with a special approach, we should find at least equal justification for grouping the Roman historical tragedies with the English Chronicle Plays, as exhibiting a particular dramatic treatment and dramatic methods which they share in common, and which serve to distinguish these plays from many plays, also in a sense histories, by other dramatists, Shakespeare's predecessors and contemporaries. No stress need be laid on the fact, though it is not devoid of significance, that, if we reckon with established dates of composition and production, the first of the Roman plays is found to fall within the period, not of the great Tragedies, but of the Mature Histories. 'Julius Caesar' was produced in 1599; Thomas Platter saw it acted at the Globe in that year; thus it almost certainly followed, and immediately followed, the English chronicle play of 'Henry V.'

One feature common to the English and the Roman histories ('Antony and Cleopatra' is no true exception), a feature, almost distinguishing, and

certainly very conspicuous, is the absence in the story of these plays of any purely romantic element, introduced for its own sake, and possessing an independent interest. This feature has more importance than that it illustrates a preference in the treatment of a certain class of plays. It reveals rather a *principle* pervading the poet's whole conception of what belongs to historic drama, and warrants the assertion for Shakespeare of the possession, in a vital degree, of a genuine historic sense. The facts of history were for him no mere scenic background against which individual character and passion may conveniently be portrayed and developed. The action of the plays in question is always a genuine piece of history, as Shakespeare received history; not a romance with some foundation, greater or less, in historical truth. The principal personages, for the most part—and without exception in the Roman plays—are public men and women whose character and destiny stand in strict relation to, and are treated as inseparable from, the public events and the social and political forces and tendencies under the influence of which their lives are cast. The Roman plays, then, are in a real sense studies in history; but since Shakespeare was playwright first and last, studies designed for the public stage, and subject to the conditions of his own theatre.

To the study of history for the stage Shakespeare brought—I think there can be no doubt—certain fixed political beliefs and convictions, which can, with no great difficulty, be determined. His attitude to political questions, let us not be afraid to declare it, was that of a Tory, the term being understood

in a sense highly honourable. In any conflict between authority and those in revolt against authority, the Tory's sympathies are engaged in advance in favour of the former. For liberty, as a principle, or ideal, capable of universal application, the Tory has no passion. Neither had Shakespeare. In 'Julius Caesar' "liberty" is just a catchword and in 'Henry V' the principle which renders ordered society possible is said to be, not liberty, but obedience. It is the Archbishop of Canterbury who speaks, but the speech is not specially "in the character." It is, as it were, merely a statement of a patent truth which there is no gainsaying:

> "Therefore doth heauen diuide
> The state of man in diuers functions,
> Setting endeauour in continual motion:
> To which is fixed as an ayme or butt,
> Obedience."

I would not, however, be misunderstood. Though the Roman plays may legitimately be termed dramatic studies in history, though a quite definite political outlook may be observed in them, they are, of course, in no right sense political tracts. It was no part of the dramatist's purpose to preach political doctrine, and no spirit could be less Shakespearian than the spirit of the propagandist or the partisan. Beliefs, opinions, political and other, meant much, we need not doubt it, to Shakespeare; but on a long account, character meant much more; and no error (as he judged it) of opinion or belief, in the figures of history who are the personages of his plays, bars the outrush of deep human sympathy for beauty, even beauty in weakness, found in character. We can see this

sympathy increasing as the creatures of Shakespeare's imagination grow to life in his hands, even at moments, it may be, of the confession of doctrines and the profession of ideals, which the poet himself repudiated, and which, as he foresaw the issue, assured tragic destiny for the great souls who cherished them. That such comprehensive tolerance is so richly exampled in the Roman plays, and especially in 'Julius Caesar,' is not the least of the causes which make these dramas so wonderful.

Over Shakespeare's imagination the career and personality of Julius Caesar exercised an extraordinary fascination. This has many times been noted. "There is no other historical character," says one critic, "who is so repeatedly alluded to throughout the plays." Many of these allusions are trifling enough, and witness merely to the frequency with which the thought of Julius Caesar recurred to the poet's mind. Others are remarkable, not only as illustrating Shakespeare's conception of Caesar's transcendent greatness, but because, though not inappropriate to the dramatic situation in which they occur, they have no striking propriety in respect of the characters in whose mouths they are put. Thus it is the little Prince in 'Richard III' who says of such an incident in Caesar's life as his (supposed) building the Tower of London, that even if it were not registered—

> "Methinks the truth should live from age to age,
> As 'twere retayl'd to all posteritie,
> Euen to the generall all-ending day.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> Death makes no Conquest of this Conqueror."

In a late play it is Cloten, a person not inclined to "love the highest when he sees it," who exclaims,

> "There be many Caesars
> Ere such another Julius;"

and in a very early play Queen Margaret recalls the act of Brutus and the other conspirators as a deed standing out in all history as the arch-type of political crime. Among allusions of another kind there is no need to be reminded of Horatio's reference in 'Hamlet' to the portents which foretold that crime,

> "In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,"

or of the tributes in the present play to "the foremost man of all the world" (from an opponent) and "the Noblest man that ever lived in the Tide of Times" spoken by an adherent, but in a soliloquy right at the centre of the play, and with a direct bearing on the tragedy's central theme.

The recollection of the notes of admiring appreciation scattered throughout the plays, prompts, and has often prompted, the question, Why did Shakespeare in his play of 'Julius Caesar' represent the great soldier and statesman as a figure theatrically of secondary importance, and in other respects not conspicuously heroic? The question may be diversely answered, but, in part, the assumption underlying it is itself open to question. A critic, analysing the text, may doubtless make out a case, especially if he emphasizes what is said about Caesar by persons who "bear him hard." Put the tragedy, however, to the true test, the test of the stage—the impression created in the minds of those sitting at the play—

and the personality of Julius moves before us as something right royal; a character, not indeed immune from calumnious stroke, but sufficiently great to render the impassioned eulogy of Antony and the calm tribute of Brutus not inconsistent with what we have actually heard and seen of the object of their praise. If a contrast is felt, then someone has blundered. It may be the player or the producer; I do not think it is the playwright.

Nevertheless, theatrically (I use the term in no disparagement) Caesar's is a minor part. So much is certain; and equally certain is it that Shakespeare, in spite of the hold Caesar had over his imagination, when he came to write a play about him, made no attempt to portray the mightiest Julius "in his huge and proper life." Many solutions might be offered of this simple puzzle, if puzzle it be, but one will suffice. The life of Caesar did not afford the stuff out of which an effective play can be constructed. Hence it is not the life, but the death of Julius, which is the central and all-controlling theme of the tragedy; the death of Caesar, the circumstances leading to, attending and resulting from it; how also several persons, greatly endowed, but not quite rising to fully tragic dimensions, were affected by it. There is truth, therefore, in the old gibe that in the play of 'Julius Caesar' the eponymous hero is brought upon the stage merely to be killed.

The personal interest in this play, the appeal of individual character, is not concentrated, as it is in the normally constructed tragedies, on one dominating figure which overshadows all the rest. It is distributed. This feature illustrates the affinity of

which I spoke between the Roman plays and the histories; for in a history play, as conceived by Shakespeare, the single hero, a Hamlet, a Lear, a Macbeth, is not essential. From the point of view of the theatre—a point of view which should not be in conflict with any other legitimate line of approach—there is in 'Julius Caesar' no bright particular star dimming the glory of all his fellows in the firmament. The varying choice of famous actor-managers, for so long as we have record of them, favouring now Brutus, now Cassius, and now again Antony, is significant; for on the stage no one of these characters dominates the action throughout. The first act of the tragedy is Cassius' act; the second is Brutus'; the third is Antony's; and in the fourth and fifth Cassius and Brutus together make a joint tragic appeal. The varying preferences of the actor-managers in this matter are indeed more instructive than the unanimity (almost) with which the commentators, partly misled by a false chronology, and also (quite naturally and profitably) absorbed in questions "from the purpose of playing," have sought the central theme of the tragedy of 'Julius Caesar' in a spiritual struggle in the soul of a single outstanding character—Brutus. But Brutus, of whom I shall have more to say presently, is not the centre and soul of the play. Apart from the obvious significance of the title, there is an objection, very simple and obvious also, which militates against the critical assumption that Brutus is the hero of the tragedy. In the first scene of each of the great normal tragedies, the leading personage, if not brought directly on the stage, is introduced so prominently in the dialogue, as

to leave the audience in no doubt as to the character on behalf of whom their interest and sympathies will principally be engaged. In the opening scene of 'Julius Caesar' Brutus is not so much as mentioned; everything that is said or done has reference to Caesar.

The opening scene of a Shakespeare play has always a peculiar significance (I do not say the feature is distinguishing), not merely in virtue of its providing a convenient and effective starting-point for what is to follow, but as furnishing a clue to the play's theme, or particular complexion, and to the nature of the action in which story and character will develop. The situation presented in the first scene of 'Julius Caesar' is distinctly a political situation; and it is accordingly against a background of politics that the action is cast. In the lesser personages individual character is shown as almost entirely determined, in the greater figures, as directly influenced, by the bias of political conceptions. The political issue treated in the play is vividly brought out in the same first scene. The conflict has its centre in the imperial sway of Julius, under which the masses of the people repose quietly in a "pathetic contentment" (to use a now famous phrase), from which it would seem they ought to be disturbed—

> "You Blockes, you stones, you worse than senseless thinges:
> . . . knew you not Pompey?"

The republican oligarchs are represented in the scene in the persons of the two politicians, Flavius and Murellus, enemies of Caesar. These eloquent

gentlemen do not appear again in the play; there is later just one brief mention of them; but they serve the turn, and their words and actions make clear the kind of political principles which form the entire stock-in-trade of the lesser members of the aristocratic conspiracy, and even of the nobler protagonists, Brutus and Cassius. The people are represented by certain commoners, afterwards styled plebeians—a term by which Shakespeare evidently understood merely the lower social orders. Their spokesmen are a worthy carpenter and a cobbler distinguished by his rude wit and genial independence of character.

Fortunately I need not dwell at any length on Shakespeare's treatment of the common people, politically considered, or of his appreciation of their qualities of heart and head. The old critical view that the poet regarded the common people as wholly foolish and despicable, that he brought "citizens" on the stage merely to ridicule them, has been refuted, I think once for all, by Professor Chambers in his memorable essay, "The Expression of Ideas, particularly Political Ideas . . . in Shakespeare."

What I desire to stress in this place is the contrast presented in the play between the visible facts of the "condition of the People," and the facts as they take shape in the imagination of the politicians. The worthy commoners have come out in their best attire to see Caesar and rejoice in his triumph. Unlike the Plebeians in 'Coriolanus,' they have no grievance. They seem to be quite happy, and fairly prosperous; only eager, like the good fellows they are, "to get themselves into more work." There is no sign that they feel themselves to be victims of any sort of

oppression, and evidently the notion that there is anything unworthy in acquiescence in a rule that is merely righteous (we have Brutus' testimony that it is righteous) is a political conception far beyond them. Comparisons of the relative merits of good government and self-government would be meaningless to them. They do not trouble their heads about political theories at all. They are not "politically minded," but they genuinely admire their country's great ones, and are hero-worshippers to a man. They rejoice at Caesar's good fortune, as later they will weep over his dead body; and when for a moment they are carried away by the noble presence of Brutus (they do not follow his arguments) their sole impulse is to make the uncompromising republican a king.

To the oligarchs, Flavius and Murellus, such subservience is an offence. They will have no holiday-making over Caesar's triumph. The great man must be boycotted, and a general fast strictly observed:

> "Runne to your houses, fall upon your knees,
> Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague
> That needs must light on this ingratitude."

Not that in their detestation of tyranny the noble senators have any respect for, or fellow-feeling with, the People. These are "idle creatures," "blocks and stones," "mechanicals" who should not stir abroad without the badge of their lowly professions: vulgar, to be driven from the streets. To Casca, a patriot "swift in execution of any bold and noble enterprise," the populace are just the tag-rag, the rabblement, owners of chopt hands, sweaty night-caps, and other malodorous properties.

Brutus, it is true, does not, and could not, speak like this; nor indeed could the noble Cassius; but, Brutus excepted, there is no sign anywhere that the enemies of the Dictator, though they have all the political catch-words at command—Liberty, Freedom, Enfranchisement, a place in the commonwealth for everybody—care one jot for the welfare of any one outside their own order.

They have a certain political ideal, shared by Brutus with the least worthy of his confederates, and the ideal rings out clear in the concluding verses of the opening scene. At first, apparently, the complaint of Flavius and Murellus against the common folk is just that the people have ceased to shout for the faction they themselves favour. When they are left to themselves—

> "These growing feathers, pluckt from Caesar's wing,
> Will make him flye an ordinary pitch,
> Who else would soare above the view of men,
> And keepe us all in seruile fearefulnesse."

There it is; just repudiation of the principle of the rule of the single person, the rule, which, to Shakespeare, was the norm of all manner of earthly power. "Now is it Rome indeed," cried Cassius,

> "Now is it Rome indeed, and Roome enough,
> When there is in it but one only man,
> O! you and I have heard our Fathers say,
> There was a *Brutus* once, that would have brook't
> The eternall Diuell to keepe his State in Rome
> As easily as a King."

Some ten years later than the composition of this play, Shakespeare, in 'Antony and Cleopatra,'

put the same political doctrine into a speech of the younger Pompey :

> " What was't
> That mou'd pale Cassius to conspire ? And what
> Made the all-honor'd, honest Romaine Brutus,
> With the arm'd rest, Courtiers of beauteous freedome,
> To drench the Capitall, but that they would
> Have one man but a man."

And, in answer to these heroics, we have the quiet comment of Caesar himself when, speaking of Cassius, he says,

> " Such men as he be never at heart's ease
> Whiles they behold a greater than themselves,
> And therefore are they very dangerous."

To Brutus, at one point, it would almost seem that the forbidden thing was not so much the actual fact of kingship as the name and symbol of royal rule. Brutus, indeed, to his credit, was not completely satisfied with the bare repudiation of kingship as such ; he wanted confirmation of the traditional belief in some pretext of injuries or oppression as an invariable concomitant of monarchic rule ; and he finds what he seeks, with the help of a most accommodating imagination, which grows, like jealousy, by what it feeds on.

That strange soliloquy of Brutus " in his orchard " has puzzled commentators. " What character," asked Coleridge, " did Shakespeare mean his Brutus to be ? " The puzzle ceases, however, when we recognize that the Brutus of Shakespeare is, for all his studious habits, no profound or subtle thinker, that he has no coherent political philosophy, and is

not the "ideal Republican" Swinburne imagined him to be. Shakespeare, perhaps, was not much interested in "ideal republicans," but he was greatly interested in a nobly-natured mistaken man, such as he pictured Brutus; a man who, in Dowden's phrase, was "studious of self-perfection," but who, just because his motives were so unblemished and his reasons so confused, was terribly liable to go astray. "It must be by his death," Brutus begins. That, by Cassius' persuasion, seems settled; and Brutus goes on to find justification for the deed which he now feels to be a duty laid on him. He has "no personal cause to spurn at" Caesar, and the absence of personal grievance seems to go some way to warrant the act. One should murder on principle, and Caesar must be killed, not to serve any selfish end, "but for the generall"; that is to say, for our jolly friends the carpenter and the shoemaker, who would be vastly astonished to learn that Caesar had to be slaughtered for their advantage. Brutus, however, makes an attempt to be honest with himself:

> "Th' abuse of Greatnesse, is, when it disioynes
> Remorse from Power."

Note, it is the abuse, not greatness itself, that Brutus boggles at; but the cobbler and his fellows so far have not suffered from the abuse; for then follows a tribute, the highest that could well be paid, to the calm wisdom and impartial justice of Caesar's rule—

> "To speak truth of Caesar,
> I have not knowne, when his Affections sway'd
> More than his Reason."

"The quarrel," he confesses, "will beare no colour

for the thing he is" ; that is, on its merits there is no case ; but we may "fashion it thus." Caesar wishes to be crowned (though, to be sure, that is just Casca's suspicion about him) ; and that *might* (still a mere possibility) "change his nature" ; and so to avoid a hypothetic disaster, let us—

> ' thinke him as a Serpent's egge,
> Which hatch'd ,would as his kinde grow mischievous ;
> And kill him in the shell."

Highly curious reasoning, in seeking to analyse which we have perhaps (to use a phrase of Johnson's), "wasted criticism on unresisting imbecility." But that precisely is how the account now stands. Brutus, in allowing his eyes even slightly to glance at reality, has for the moment proved false to the republican faith that is in him. We shall forget it presently, as Brutus himself sublimely forgets. A very little while after this self-communing we hear Brutus, carried away by self-engendered emotion, passionately exhorting his confederates :

> "*Bru :* Give me your hands all ouer, one by one,
> *Cas. :* And let vs sweare our Resolution.
> *Bru. :* No, not an Oath : if not the Face of men,"

—(the pleasant countenances of the holiday-making artisans, for instance)—

> "if not the Face of men,
> The sufferance of our Soules, the Times Abuse ;
> If these be Motiues weake, breake off betimes,
> And every man hence, to his idle bed :
> So let high-sighted Tyranny range on,
> Till each man drops by Lottery."

So short a space has been needed to convert, in Brutus' mind, greatness that has never been abused,

and impulse never uncontrolled by reason, into a high-sighted tyranny under which no man's life is safe.

From this pinnacle of patriotic fervour Brutus never afterwards descends. It is all hallucination, of course, but it has come to have the sanction of a religious faith. No argument is needed to establish it. When he addresses the people Brutus simply asserts that Caesar had to be slain because he was ambitious; if they ask for proof, they must have "respect to his honour," and take his word for it that it is so. And so when the spell of Brutus' presence is withdrawn, Antony has an easy task; for Antony *does* deal in argument, such as his hearers can appreciate; he bases his arguments on facts well known to them; so that in a little the honour of Brutus seems to rest on foundations as frail as does the ambition of Caesar; and the work of the conspirators is undone. In Brutus, however, the process of self-deception goes on. Before Philippi he has brought himself to believe that Caesar, the ruler whose justice Brutus himself had confessed to be beyond reproach, had been righteously struck down "for supporting robbers,"—

> "Did not great *Iulius* bleede for Iustice sake?
> What Villaine touch'd his body, that did stab,
> And not for Iustice? What? Shall one of Vs,
> That strucke the Formost man of all this World,
> But for supporting Robbers . . . "

And so on. And again, when the cause is lost, Brutus takes comfort in the thought that he will—

> "have glory by this loosing day
> More than *Octauius*, and *Marke Antony*,
> By this vile Conquest shall attaine vnto."

Such, in Shakespeare, is Brutus the politician; and the strange inconsistencies cannot be charged to the playwright's account. They are of the texture of Brutus' nature. Noble-hearted and sincere beyond question, he is intellectually dishonest. Fanatic as he is, he has never schooled himself to face facts. Placed on a pedestal by adoring friends, he accepts the position a little too complacently. His self-righteousness renders him incapable of recognising the possibility that he himself, in opinion or conduct, can ever be in the wrong. He is (so he imagines) "Arm'd so strong in honesty" that censure passes by him "as the idle winde" which he "respects not." And while he is himself inconsistent, even so does he suffer his associates, unreproved, to speak and act in glaring contradiction of the pure and lofty protestations with which he is always ready. Cassius can pour into his ear, unchecked, dispraise of Caesar, inspired plainly by mere envy and spite. Caius Ligarius is welcomed as a confederate in an enterprise, pronounced to be free from all taint of personal malice, on the ground that he bears Caesar a grudge. One need not recall the treachery of Decius and Trebonius, evil means to an evil end, but approved by Brutus. His own conduct, apart from the capital crime, is sometimes at strange variance with principles simultaneously professed. We remember in what high terms Brutus denounces corruption . . . the itching palm, the fingers contaminated with base bribes, the "mighty space of our large Honors" sold "for so much, trash, as may be grasped thus." "I myself," he exclaims—

> " had rather Coine my Heart,
> And drop my Blood for Drachmaes, then to wring
> From the hard hands of Peazants, their vile trash
> By any indirection . . . "

Splendid sentiments, and no doubt inspired by conscious rectitude. We forget for the moment—we are intended to forget—that Brutus' indignation is due not only to hatred of extortion, but to resentment because (as he asserts) Cassius has refused him a share of the " vile trash " so indirectly obtained.

Then there is that curious passage in the last Act, (the wording somewhat confused in North; the meaning worse-confounded in Shakespeare) in which Brutus in one breath declares suicide " cowardly and vile," and in the next assures Cassius that he " bears so great a mind " that if the worst comes to the worst, he will fall by his own hand. In the end, however he may have judged Cato, he kills himself, with no word to suggest a suspicion that the deed is other than entirely glorious. Pathetically inconsistent to the last; for, as his " tongue ends his liues History," we do not know how he judges of it; whether it has, or has not all been in vain.

> " Night hangs upon mine eyes, my Bones would rest
> That have but labour'd to attain this houre."

He believes he will have glory; and one clear gain he can record—

> " Countrymen,
> My heart doth ioy, that yet in all my life,
> I found no man, but he was true to me."

A wholly beautiful thought!

We do not remember, we are not intended at the moment to remember, that of these true friends Caesar

was one, and not the least ; we do not reflect that with all the talk of loving where he slew, of sacrificing a victim not butchering a man, no word of simple human compunction for his monstrous ingratitude has ever escaped Brutus' lips. There is no irony in all this. Shakespeare, I think, has no dealings with irony, as it is now sometimes understood ; it is not the *vanity* of false political aspirations and visionary aims which asks emotional response ; it is "the pity of it." Even the befogged and wholly mischievous politician in Brutus demands and receives pity ; but he would not be the compellingly human figure Shakespeare has made him, were he not shown at moments when life really matters, when the aspirations of politicians, worthy and unworthy, fade into nothingness.

It would be an impertinence to dwell on this side of the picture at any length. It has been so often done and done so well—all the tenderness and beauty of the relations between Brutus and his noble wife ; the gentleness which, even when he is "sick of many griefs," will not suffer him to waken a sleeping boy ; the deep sincerity of the love which, even in perversity, binds him to Cassius ; the sad solemnity of their farewell—

> "For euer, and for euer, farewell *Cassius*,
> If we do meete againe, why we shall smile ;
> If not, why then this parting was well made ; "

and the profundity of grief revealed in the final tribute spoken over Cassius dead, the slowly reiterated words, which linger and fall heavily, like a passing bell, on the ear :

"Friends, I owe mo tears
To this dead man, then you shall see me pay,
I shall find time, Cassius: I shall find time."

The Cassius of Shakespeare is a simpler study, but filled in with no less sympathy—at least so it appears to me—than that of Brutus. We only miss the dramatist's purpose if, with most of the commentator's, we persist in regarding Cassius as a foil to Brutus, or as a type of this or that politician or man. The meagreness and crudity of Cassius's political creed needs no demonstration. He shares it to the full with the "lesser villains" from whom, on the spiritual plane, he is not distinguished in the same way as is Brutus. It is a poor creed at the best, but we may note the constancy and real heroism with which Cassius clings to it. The old conservative Roman republicanism, with its uncompromising repudiation of "one-man" rule, was, to Cassius, a thing well worth dying for. He is prepared at any moment to die for it, in the high Roman fashion, and in the end does so die for it. Cassius, like Brutus, is a political fanatic; but a more straightforward and simple-minded fanatic. Subtle distinctions between the tyrant and the tyranny are as much beyond him as is the conception of doing "an act of rage" otherwise than "wrathfully," or the pious sophistry which would rob butchery of its grossness by calling it a sacrifice. Cassius does not look too nicely into means and motives, but he has a personal dignity which will not stoop to flattery or glaring deceit. He distrusts Caesar, and knows himself distrusted; but it is significant that he separates himself from the final act of treachery to

which even Brutus stoops, and is the only conspirator who does not present himself on the morning of the Ides at Caesar's house to accept his hospitality "like a friend," and then lead him to his death. It is at any rate erroneous to conceive of Cassius as an arch-plotter and unscrupulous leader of faction, to whom all means are lawful and all men tools to be used and cast aside. Nothing indeed can be more unjust than the last charge; for the human affections are not less strongly developed in Cassius than they are in Brutus, with whom they are under a certain restraint, or than they are in Antony. Few things are perhaps more pathetic in Shakespeare than the art by which he gradually reveals to us the softer and tenderer side in the nature of the rugged old politician and soldier. The personal love of Cassius for Brutus is emphasized in the first Act of 'Julius Caesar,' but it is in the later part of the play that the depth and tenderness in Cassius' nature are fully revealed. In the famous quarrel scene, of which Coleridge declared that no part of Shakespeare more impressed on him "the belief of his genius being superhuman," Cassius is hurt because he thinks Brutus has slighted him; and when Brutus answers his complaints with reproaches and false charges, he is for the moment goaded to anger; but when the friend he loves and honours above all men mocks at him and spurns him with derision, resentment gives places to far more painful emotions, and the old man, sorely wounded in the most sensitive spot, breaks into passionate complaining like a child:

> "Come *Antony* and young *Octavius*, come,
> Revenge yourselves alone on *Cassius*,

For *Cassius* is aweary of the world :
Hated by one he loves ; braved by his brother."

From this point Shakespeare invests the figure of Cassius with an ever-deepening pathos. After the quarrel is made up and the misunderstanding cleared away, Cassius learns of Brutus' sorrow, of Portia's death, and the generous nature of the man shows itself in bitter self-reproach—

" How scap'd I killing, when I crost you so ? "

In the last act of the play all that we hear and see of Cassius is calculated to awaken pity and affection. Brutus has chosen a policy which Cassius knows to be mistaken ; but Cassius has yielded, as he has ever yielded. He confides his misgivings to Messala. He has little hope. The old confident Epicureanism is deserting him, the belief that men are masters of their fate. The gods, he now sees, are stronger than he, and the gods are fighting against him. Yet he will not shrink from the issue :

" I but beleeue it partly,
For I am fresh of Spirit, and resolu'd
To meete all perils, very constantly."

He is " fresh of spirit," he says ; but the words fall a little wearily. Then the final parting follows, and the two friends take their everlasting farewell. Cassius has no words of his own ; he can only wistfully repeat the words Brutus has spoken :

" For euer, and for euer, farewell *Brutus :*
If we do meet againe, wee'l smile indeed ;
If not, 'tis true, this parting was well made."

The battle begins, and despite his desperate endeavours, Cassius' division is routed. He sends his friend Titinius to reconnoitre, and is led to believe he has been captured. Once more the innate generosity of the man breaks forth in self-condemnation :

> " O Coward that I am, to liue so long,
> To see my best Friend tane before my face."

Cassius has already half resolved to die. It is his birthday : " Time is come round," he says ; " My life has run his compass, and where I did begin, there shall I end." As the sun sinks he falls on his sword, the sword that had stabbed Caesar, at the very moment when his friends are eagerly approaching to tell him of Brutus' victory, news which, as Titinius well knows, will with Cassius amply compensate for his own reverse. When they find him dead Titinius bursts into mingled praise and lamentation : " Cassius is no more, the sun of Rome is set, our day is gone." When the others have departed to seek Brutus, Titinius, disdaining to outlive his master, perishes on Cassius's sword. The tribute of Titinius is followed by the tribute of Brutus :

> " The last of all the Romans, far thee well :
> It is impossible, that euer Rome
> Should breed thy fellow."

I cannot for a moment believe that the Cassius whose end Shakespeare has thus surrounded with every circumstance of tragic pity, over whose body so glorious a sacrifice is performed, whose worth is so unstintingly attested, whose loss is so passionately and so solemnly mourned, is the Cassius of the commentators. I know of no greater example of the all

embracing tolerance, the divine humanity of Shakespeare than the picture of this man; whose aims, opinions and actions could merit in his eye only unqualified condemnation, but whose character he has invested with qualities that compel admiration and love.

The world of political ideas in which Cassius moves is that in which the conspirators generally—other than Brutus, who inhabits a dream-world of his own—have their being. I have already remarked that the republicans are wholly unconcerned with the welfare of the common people. Brutus may imagine that the sacrifice of Caesar will give every Roman citizen "a share in the Commonwealth." From the lips of the others no such professions are heard Cassius indeed naïvely lets slip to Antony the real end for which the blow was struck. It is the old oligarchic motive, for which we need not search deeply in the recesses of history to find a parallel:

> "Your voyce (says Cassius) shall be as strong as any man's,
> In the disposing of new Dignities."

The "Courtiers of beauteous Freedom" are to share the spoils of office amongst themselves. As for the populace, they are to be quieted and kept in their place. The liberty aimed at by the republican party carries with it no vestige of popular rights or privileges; the equality which they seek to establish by the downfall of the "Colossus" is to be confined within the narrowest limits. It is, however, significant that their principles, even so restricted, are belied by their actions. The truth is illustrated in 'Julius Caesar'

(I am far from saying that the purpose of the play is to deliver this, or any other, " message ") that the professed creeds of men often sit very lightly on them, and have frequently very little to do with the real government of their conduct. Equality, of a kind—share and share alike—is the ideal of these men, but the principle collapses in practice. There may be a change in masters ; never a total abolition of mastership. Cassius, who " has as lief not be " as endure the bondage of witnessing a greater than himself, whom he does not love, surrenders himself to the man he does love ; again and again suffers his judgment to be over-ridden, his suggestions rebuked, and his arguments set aside as scarcely worthy of attention. And as Cassius surrenders his better judgment to Brutus, so Casca, who has no opinions of his own, is content to echo those of Cassius. This is amusingly exemplified in the conversation about the policy of including Cicero among the conspirators. Cassius diffidently suggests that Cicero should be sounded. " Let us not leave him out," Casca chimes in. Cassius abandons his proposal in deference to Brutus' opinion. " Indeed he is not fit," is Casca's emphatic comment. None of the other conspirators manifest any greater independence, but Ligarius outdoes them all in unquestioning obedience and self-effacing loyalty. He will do things impossible at Brutus's mere command. His not to reason why ; he will follow " to do he knows not what " ; it is enough that Brutus points the way. Truly " hero-worship is perennial," even amongst regicidal oligarchs ready to drench the Capitol in order to have one man but a man.

Something in conclusion must be said of that character in the play who, sharply distinguished in aims and temperament from the faction of Brutus and Cassius, becomes the instrument by which their whole cause is brought to ruin. Shakespeare's portrait of Mark Antony in this play, though for the immediate design eminently sufficient, is still an unfinished study. When, some ten years later, he again turned to the career of Antony as a subject for dramatic treatment, it is the same man, grown older, that he presents to us. There are the same blots in character, only intensified. The pleasure-lover who "revels long o' nights," is now the "old ruffian" who has become "the Fan to coole a Gypsies lust." There is the same impulsive unscrupulousness which at moments renders Antony almost odious, as in the bargaining away of the lives of friends and kinsfolk, in 'Julius Caesar'; in the desertion of Octavia, and the brutal treatment of the younger Caesar's envoy, in the latter tragedy. There is the same infirmity of purpose, not much more than suggested in the earlier play, which at critical moments may reduce Antony to the position of a secondary at command to a politician his superior in calculating cleverness, but with none of those magnetic qualities that render Antony to all sorts and conditions of men so attractive. There is lastly the same instinct which first impels devotion to one who is supremely great, but which later induces surrender to one great only in the possession of an infinite variety of charm. Antony has no guiding principles, public or private. It would be idle to look in him for any reasoned patriotism, even of the perverted kind which satisfies

Cassius; but unconsciously he typifies in himself—at least in the earlier play—a quality in the absence of which no body politic and no private society can hold together—the binding spirit of loyalty. The political ideals which he instinctively follows are of the feudal, not of the civic order; but, in their way, they are magnificent. Antony, by a discerning critic, has been described as an opportunist and a demagogue. I venture to differ. Swift to seize occasion when a sudden crisis lights up for him the way, he is no opportunist, if by opportunism we understand the sacrifice of principles, including the obligation of loyalty, to expediency, the deft evasion of difficulties; the absence of all faith, except the curious belief that mere cleverness, and cleverness alone, has the virtue to see a man through. Judged by any respectable standard an opportunist is a poor creature; and one thing is certain, no playwright, not even Shakespeare, could make of an opportunist even a passable hero of Tragedy. It is not by opportunism that Antony's great achievements have been won. At a crisis, as after the murder of Caesar, he shows, not cleverness so much, as a truly appalling courage. It is not by opportunism that Antony lives, and it is not in the spirit or with the words of an opportunist that he takes leave of life:

> " I am dying Egypt, dying,
> Give me some Wine, and let me speake a little.
>
> . . . . . .
>
> The miserable change now at my end,
> Lament nor sorrow at: but please your thoughts
> In feeding them with those my former Fortunes,
> Wherein I liued, the greatest Prince o' the world,

> The Noblest: and do now not basely dye,
> Not cowardly put off my Helmet to
> My Countrymen. A Roman, by a Roman
> Valiantly vanquish'd."

That is the last impression we have of Antony in Shakespeare, and it is noble and exalted. Splendid, too, are the final words he speaks in this play, a most generous tribute to a fallen foe; the generosity of an essentially noble spirit; a chivalry to which had the positions been reversed, for all the perfect mixture of the elements in his nature, the moral flawlessness of Brutus could not have attained.

Neither is Antony a demagogue, in the generally accepted sense of the term, though beyond question, when the need arises, he knows how, by moving language, to sway crowds to his will. But demagogy is not his trade. If the Antony of the Cleopatra play be brought into the reckoning, there can be no question of this. But on a point of this kind we cannot admissibly go beyond the impression created in the single play. Confining ourselves to 'Julius Caesar' we can still assert that Antony is no true demagogue, and does not play, even on occasion, a demagogue's part. The art of demagogy is to persuade masses of people to mischievous ends by an insincere appeal; always unworthy, and generally an appeal to the lower and baser elements in human nature; to vanity, envy and avarice. The demagogue's chief instrument is flattery, blatant and unashamed, or skilfully disguised. The mob must be hypnotized into a state of complete self-satisfaction; the sum of a thousand ignorances must work out as one collective wisdom; the accumulation of selfish and spiteful

individual desires must be made to seem a nobly righteous indignation. But this is not Antony's way. We should, moreover, observe what is often forgotten, that the cause of Antony, and not that of Brutus, is the just and righteous cause. To what extent political assassination may be defended or condoned by advanced political thinkers of to-day, one is not concerned to inquire, but there can be no doubt that to Shakespeare's way of thinking, however much he extends sympathy to the perpetrators of the deed, the murder of Julius was the foulest crime in secular history. That is how it appeared to Antony, and that at a moment when there can be no question of his absolute sincerity ; the moment, I mean, of the impassioned prophecy uttered over the murdered Caesar, who was at once his friend, faithful and just to him, and the noblest man that ever lived in the Tide of Times. There was at that moment only one way of retribution, not the way Antony, had the choice been open, would have elected, for Antony was a soldier first of all, but he takes it—at a terrible risk to himself. This also is not the demagogue's way, for the typical demagogue, careless of what may befall his dupes, is not anxious to endanger his own skin.

" There shall I try," he says to the messenger of Octavius,

> " There shall I try
> In my Oration, how the People take
> The cruel issue of these bloody men."

The result was the institution, for a time, of mob law, a hateful thing, almost always ; but if Antony

let lawlessness loose for an hour or two, in order to redress a great public wrong, the visionaries who drenched the Capitol for a fatuous and futile idea had no just grievance. Moreover, the means by which Antony roused the common people to fury were not those the demagogue loves. Nor was that passionate appeal in reality merely the product of conscious artifice. The spirit that informs the wonderful speech is identical with the spirit of the prophecy uttered when there was no one to hear. Antony, moreover, does not deal in flattery, but in reproaches—

> "You all did love him once, not without Cause:
> What Cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
> O Iudgement! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
> And men haue lost their reason."

Antony does not play on the worst instincts of the mob; the feelings which respond to his appeal are not instincts of greed, but of gratitude, of loyalty, of love, of admiration, lastly of pity for one, yesterday so great and now no worthier than the dust. Wholly generous emotions, all of them. True, there is the matter of the Will, the bequest of the private gardens for public recreation, the gift to each citizen of seventy-five drachmas; but here, too, the appeal is to gratitude, and not the gratitude that is the sense of favours to come. The benefactor is dead, his power and influence are departed, "and none so poor to do him reverence." Then also, we may remember, the Will in the event proves almost superfluous; the people had been won before the Will was produced, and indeed, when it comes to be read, they are hardly persuaded to stay to hear it.

Simple facts and simple arguments, such as the mob could appreciate and understand, are the matter of Antony's funeral oration :

> " When that the poore haue cry'de, *Caesar* hath wept :
> Ambition should be made of sterner stuff."

" Why, of course," the citizens agree, " it must be so," and the plea of ambition, Brutus' only plea, is at once and for ever refuted. The mob had heard Brutus' carefully prepared, filed and polished rhetoric—" There is Teares, for his Loue : Ioy, for his Fortune : Honor, for his Valour : and Death, for his Ambition." Very fine speaking, no doubt, but to the common man conveying very little meaning. But—

> " He was my Friend, faithful, and iust to me . . . "

and,

> " (as you know me all) a plaine blunt man
> That loue my Friend . . . "

that is another matter altogether. Antony sways the people, not only because he speaks to them in words they can understand, but because his own feelings, impulses and ideals are the same as their own. They take him to their hearts because, though " there's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony," he is after all just one of themselves. And that is the secret of his power over all sorts of simply-natured souls ; rude artisans, rough soldiers, and even the lacqueys about Cleopatra's Court. He makes the servants weep, as he makes the citizens weep, for he is weeping himself :

'Well, my good Fellowes, wait on me tonight

. . . . . .

Tend me tonight;
May be, it is the period of your duty,
Haply you shall not see me more, or if,
A mangled shadow. Perchance tomorrow,
You'l serue another Master. I looke on you,
As one that takes his leaue. Mine honest Friends,
I turne you not away, but like a Master
Married to your good seruice, stay till death:
Tend me tonight two houres, I aske no more,
And the Gods yield you for't."

Such is Antony the man; not a good man by any means; quite otherwise, but a creature with a human touch that is irresistible.

When we regard the play on the political side, Antony is significant as the instrument of retributory nemesis, the nemesis that attends public crime and political folly. The centre of the play, as it bears on public life, is the great soliloquy of Antony, to which I have several times referred. If we would understand the play's political meaning we must fasten our attention there; it is the climax of the tragedy. But, as I insisted at the beginning, the drama is not a political tract, nor has it a political, or other, message. And so, when Antony has triumphed, and all our interests and sympathies have, for a while, been centred on him, Shakespeare tacks about, and invokes sympathy, not for the redressers of a public wrong, but for the erring human creatures who committed it. This is not the way of the dramatist with a message. With him sympathies and antipathies must remain constant as the message demands. But in 'Julius Caesar' the third Act

ends, and the fourth begins, each with a scene which weakens sympathy for Caesar's avengers, and so prepares the way for a full return of interest in the two who are the noblest of Caesar's enemies, and to them, during the rest of the play, admiration and pity go out unstinted. Not that we are ever suffered to regard the cause of Brutus and Cassius as a just cause. The ghost of Caesar which appeared to Brutus, "two several times by night," warns us against this; and at the very end of the tragedy we are reminded that the motives which prompted the crime were, in all but one of those who struck, essentially unworthy. They (all but one)—

> "Did that they did,
> In envy of great Caesar."

But the final thought, as the martial procession bearing Brutus' body leaves the stage, is not of the dead man's appalling misdeed, or of the miserable fatuity of his political creed, but of the human virtues which made his life beautiful and beloved:

> "His life was gentle, and the Elements
> So mixt in him, that Nature might stand vp,
> And say to all the world: 'This was a man'."

That is Shakespeare's way.

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CONTENTS OF VOLS. I—IX.

VOL. I.

PAGE

Introduction. By Sir Henry Newbolt, D.Litt., F.R.S.L. v

Papers read or contributed during Session 1919–1920:

I. Collins, and the English Lyric in the Eighteenth Century. By Dr. J. W. Mackail, M.A., F.R.S.L. 1

II. The Parson in Literature. By the Rev. P. H. Ditchfield, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.S.L. . . . 25

III. An All-Embracing Genius: Leonardo da Vinci. By Professor Antonio Cippico, R.S.L. . . 61

IV. Juan Luis Vives: A Scholar of the Renascence. 1492–1540. By Professor Foster Watson, F.R.S.L. 81

V. Walt Whitman and America. By the Right Hon. Lord Charnwood, M.A., F.R.S.L. . . . 103

VI. Culture as the Bond of Empire. By Sir Francis Younghusband, K.C.I.E., F.R.S.L. . . . 125

VOL. II.

Introduction. By W. R. Inge, C.V.O., D.D., D.Litt., F.B.A., F.R.S.L. v

I. The English Ode. By Laurence Binyon, F.R.S.L. 1

II. "Idylls of the King" in 1921. By F. S. Boas, LL.D., F.R.S.L. 23

III. Some Writers on English Country Life. By the Most Hon. the Marquess of Crewe, K.G., LL.D., President, R.S.L., etc. 43

IV. Some Memorialists of the Period of the Restoration. By Sir Henry M. Imbert-Terry, Bart., F.R.S.L. 69

V. A Great Poet in Another Art—Beethoven. By Ernest Kiver, F.R.C.O., F.R.S.L. . . . 107

VI. Classical Metres in English Poetry. By W. R. Inge, C.V.O., D.D. D.Litt., F.B.A., F.R.S.L. . 131

VOL. III.

PAGE

Introduction. By F. S. Boas, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.L. . v

I. The Future of the English Language. By Sir Henry Newbolt, C.H., D.Litt., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 1

II. Some Tasks for Dramatic Scholarship. By Harley Granville-Barker, F.R.S.L. 17

III. Some Characteristics of Modern Literature. By Alfred Noyes, C.B.E., Litt.D., F.R.S.L. . . 39

IV. The Centenary of Shelley. By Professor Paul de Reul 69

V. William Cobbett. By G. K. Chesterton, F.R.S.L. 89

VI. The Naturalistic Motive in Modern Pictures. By Edwin Fagg, F.R.S.L. 99

VOL. IV.

Introduction. By Edmund Gosse, C.B., LL.D., D.Litt., F.R.S.L. v

I. William Cory. By John Drinkwater, M.A., F.R.S.L. 1

II. Chivalry and the Sea. By Professor John Holland Rose, Litt.D., F.R.S.L. . . . 33

III. The Art of Narrative-Poetry. By Professor R. Warwick Bond, M.A., F.R.S.L. . . . 55

IV. Dante and St. Louis. By Robert W. Ramsey, F.S.A., F.R.S.L. 71

V. Peacock, Scott, and Robin Hood. By Sir Henry Newbolt, C.H., D.Litt., LL.D., F.R.S.L. . . 87

VI. Saints' Lives Written in Anglo-French: Their Historical, Social and Literary Importance. By Professor A. T. Baker, Litt.D., F.R.S.L. . . 119

VOL. V.

PAGE

Introduction. By John Drinkwater, M.A., F.R.S.L. . v

I. The Pleasure of Reading. By the Rt. Hon. Viscount Grey of Fallodon, K.G., V.-P. R.S.L. 1

II. On Translating Plays. By Harley Granville-Barker, F.R.S.L. 19

III. The Spanish Drama as an Element of Moral Education. By Dr. Rafael Altamira, F.R.S.L. 43

IV. Some Notes on the Unpopularity of Landor. By John Bailey, M.A., F.R.S.L. 63

V. The Old and New in Literature. By John Buchan, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 87

VI. Some Poets and their Scenery. By Sir Henry Newbolt, C.H., M.A., D.Litt., V.-P. R.S.L. . 113

VOL. VI.

Introduction. By G. K. Chesterton v

I. The Royal Society of Literature: an Outline. By the Most Hon. the Marquess of Crewe, K.G., President, R.S.L. 1

II. Ballads. By Mrs. Margaret L. Woods, F.R.S.L. 25

III. A Franciscan Poet—Jacopone da Todi. By Evelyn Underhill, F.R.S.L. 43

IV. Christina Rossetti. By Walter de la Mare, LL.D., F.R.S.L. 79

V. Swinburne and Baudelaire. By the Hon. Harold Nicolson, C.M.G., F.R.S.L. 117

VI. The Art of the Biographer. By A. C. Benson, Esq., C.V.O., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 139

VII. Address by Mr. Rudyard Kipling . . . 165

VOL. VII.

PAGE

Introduction. By Margaret L. Woods, F.R.S.L. . . v

I. The Reminiscences of a Chancellor and his Wife. By Sir Henry Imbert-Terry, Bt., F.R.S.L. . . 1

II. Some Tendencies of Modern English Poetry. By V. Sackville-West, F.R.S.L. 39

III. Inigo Jones: A Modern View. By J. A. Gotch, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.I.B.A., F.R.S.L. . . . 55

IV. Jane Austen. By Professor Caroline F. E. Spurgeon, Litt.D., F.R.S.L. 81

V. Yiddish Literature of the Middle Ages. By Dr. M. Gaster, Ph.D., Bachelier des Lettres et Sciences 105

VI. The Miracle Play in Mediaeval England. By Professor J. M. Manly, Litt.D., L.H.D., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 133

VOL. VIII.

Introduction. By Laurence Binyon, F.R.S.L. . . v

I. The Religious Background in Literature. By Robert Lynd, F.R.S.L. 1

II. Jane Austen: A Depreciation. By Professor H. W. Garrod, C.B.E., M.A., F.R.S.L. 21

III. Charles De Coster. By Camille Huysmans, Belgian Minister of Science and Art 41

IV. Edward Young. By Marjorie Bowen, F.R.S.L. . 57

V. Celtic Nature Poetry. By Alfred Perceval Graves, Litt.D., F.R.S.L. 81

VI. Great Rides in Literature. By A. E. W. Mason, F.R.S.L. 107

VOL. IX.

PAGE

Introduction. By John Bailey, M.A., F.R.S.L. . . v

I. John Bunyan. By W. L. Courtney, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S.L. 1

II. The Schoolmaster in Shakespeare's Plays. By J. Dover Wilson, Litt.D., F.R.S.L. . . . 9

III. The Writer's Partner. By Clemence Dane, F.R.S.L. 35

IV. Gotthold Ephraim Lessing. By Professor J. G. Robertson, M.A., D.Litt., Ph.D., F.R.S.L. . . 61

V. The Religion of Rabindranath Tagore. By A. Yusuf Ali, C.B.E., M.A., LL.M., F.R.S.L. . . 79

VI. Some Aspects of Mysticism in Verse. By the Hon. Evan Morgan, F.R.S.L. 103

VII. English Influence on Japanese. By Professor Sanki Ichikawa, F.R.S.L. 125

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